AN OPEN-AIR PULPIT

FATHER RONALD KNOX

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AN OPEN-AIR PULPIT

BY

FATHER RONALD KNOX

LONDON
CONSTABLE AND CO LTD
1926

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.
CHISWICK PRESS : CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND GRIGGS (PRINTERS), LTD.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

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PREFACE

THESE essays are reprinted, the last from the *Weekly Dispatch*, the rest from the *Evening Standard*, with suitable acknowledgements to the editors of both papers. I doubt the policy of offering the public any explanation of my action in reprinting them. I thought that they would lend each other countenance when they found themselves in company; but now I come to look at them, they seem rather to put each other to the blush. Still, people who can't think of anything else to say are apt to tell me they always miss my article in the *Evening Standard*, "can't buy it every day on the chance, can one?" Such friends will pay the penalty of the over-polite when confronted with these shock tactics. Meanwhile, I have not attempted to disguise the occasional character of the pieces by deleting all references to "these columns," "a fortnight ago," and so on. It would need more than that to shake off the dust of Grub Street.

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AN OPEN-AIR PULPIT

THE FEAR OF THE FUTURE

THERE is a fascination in bulk and in everything done on a large scale which makes this excitement about St. Paul's Cathedral haunt the imagination of the dullest : it provokes to wonder. Have they, for example, insured Westminster Cathedral against falling down ? Now, surely, is the time to begin, while they can get low premiums to start with. I should like to see an actuary sitting down to work out the exact number of centuries Westminster Cathedral was good for.

Or, again, is it really the Tubes that shake these immemorial foundations ? If you answer with a facile affirmative, let me urge you to give up using lifts during Lent (an excellent discipline) and reconsider the problem on one of your upward journeys.

Once more, if they lower the dome one thirty-thousandth of an inch, or whatever it is, will old gentlemen in clubs say that they can distinctly see the difference ? Some will, assuredly.

But there is one speculation above all which tugs at the apron-strings of fancy till there is no holding it in any longer. Let it be understood from the first that it is not released from any desire to prejudice the chances of the Fund or to interfere in the great controversy over ways and means. But the question will ask itself, Why do we all assume, as a matter of course, that it is better to repair an old

cathedral than to build a new one instead, even if the repairs should prove more expensive ?

The question, no doubt, is entirely unpractical. For all I know, it would be unsafe to let St. Paul's stand as it is, and ruinously expensive to pull it down, or even export it to America. It would be very interesting, statistically, to watch the effect upon Sunday morning congregations of a continually increasing probability that a piece of extra loud pedal work, or even an incautious thump on the pulpit, might bring the whole building down upon a congregation, as Hamlet would say, "fit and seasoned for the passage." Who knows but, among the young, church-going would be the more popular for the slight element of bravado ? Ominous rumblings in the roof above would be an even surer way of closuring the tedious orator than the hour-glass of our forefathers. The Seventh-Day Adventists, besides, disappointed over the eclipse, could have a Domesday all to themselves. But probably this course of inaction would be vetoed on some technical ground. Yes, by all means let us proceed to the restoration.

Only, men of another age would not have shouldered so lightly the burden of repair. I do not say they would have built instead, but they would have wanted to build. Your mediæval architect, it is plain to see, took no sort of trouble about restoring the monuments of the past ; he would far rather substitute his present. Scarcely one of our old cathedrals but is a palimpsest of successive vandalisms. And Wren, if he was the man I take him for,

cared even less for the style of architecture he displaced and replaced. If you had asked him whether he regretted the old St. Paul's which the fire destroyed, his answer would have probably been something like this :—

" Sir, it has pleased Almighty God to remove Paul's Church by fire. That barbarous edifice, in which our fellow-citizens worshipped this long while, for want of better accommodation offered, will no longer offend the polite taste of our age with its horrid irregularities. By which happy Providence the memory of our former beastly superstitions being now quite taken away and abolished, and the very uncouth appearance of its ogees, crockets, corbels, and other cross-word clues being utterly consumed (for that the fire shall try every man's work, Scripture itself warrants us to believe, first of Corinthians, three and thirteen) ; it is our purpose to raise a seemly temple on the site thus happily evacuated, whose harmonious dispositions shall be more convenient to our present enlightened times. The greater dignity and ponderability of the classick style being now generally appreciated, for goodness' sake let's get on with it." Or words to that effect.

Suppose, on the contrary, that danger to the existing building had been present, and had discovered itself, at the height of the Ruskinian period—say, 1880 or thereabouts. No doubt the Dean and Chapter would have set about making an appeal, like the present Dean and Chapter, and no doubt it would have been successful. But is it not certain that there would have been a furious minority outcry from the Gothic school, demanding that

Wren's heathen abomination should be allowed to sink into the gutter it was raised from? And would not the Hand of Providence, though perhaps with a slightly less capital P, have been equally traced in the present threats of ruin?

"Rome" (I hear them saying) "fell, on the testimony of one of her own poets, by her own weight. Not otherwise does our clumsy imitation of the worst among all the bad buildings in Rome threaten a long-desired collapse, after scarce two centuries of unsightly prominence and inglorious history. The Abbey, with its perfect balance of pointed arch, buttress, and vault, still defies the assaults of umpteen centuries; the meretriciously disguised utilitarianism of Wren's unimaginative engineering totters already towards its inevitable dissolution. We are pained to learn that a section of obscure but highly-placed Philistines actually proposes to bolster up this monstrosity by methods no less mechanical and no less costly than those which originally raised it. To pray that it may fall on their heads were an idle aspiration, since it is hardly likely that even so direct a process could knock sense into them." And a little more tonic talk of that kind. We should not have minced our words forty years back.

To-day we do not quite know whether we like the thing or not—we do not quite know whether we like anything or not. But St. Paul's must stand; that is axiomatic. If some sardonic oracle assured us that it could only be preserved if the Aldermen of London took it in turns to support the dome, Atlas-like,

on their shoulders, they would accept the burden. We do not really think our own architecture is particularly bad: we can do Gothic better than 1880 could, and it is probable that we could re-erect the existing building, if we would, more enduringly. Yet, though it should cost five millions to shore up Wren's building, nobody would suggest rebuilding instead.

What is it, then? Reverence for our history, and for the past? But there is not very much history in St. Paul's, as cathedrals go. But for Sacheverell's sermon, which brought Marlborough's campaigning to an end, its part in the fortunes of England has been nothing but a series of pageants, jubilee celebrations, and such statistical triumphs. For most of us its history has been told when we have been told that Johnson worshipped there. And do we reverence the past? The other day we dug up Tut-ankh-Amen to satisfy the curiosity of archæologists. Many of us are quite ready to knock down the City churches and make way for fresh outbursts of desirable premises. But this thing, which has become a landmark, must remain a landmark for ever.

What we call reverence for the past is surely, if you analyse it without prejudice, fear of the future. We have grown self-conscious, these last fifty years, and the self-conscious man's terror of bad form paralyses our public activity. We have criticised our grandfathers so freely that we are nervous about how our grandchildren will criticise us. Never shall it be said that through our fault something disappeared which somebody, some day, might admire.

The test case was Balliol Chapel : when the offer was made to pull it down and rebuild, nobody was hardy enough to suggest that it was beautiful, but nobody dared to accept the offer. St. Paul's is beautiful ; but even the people who think it ugly have not the courage of their convictions, such is our fear of posterity : a posterity which, as like as not, will be sweating blood to shore up the Albert Hall. We assume that our descendants will want to know how they built in Charles II's reign, and will not want to know how they built in the reign of George V. " I have raised a monument more lasting than brass," was the old boast : nowadays we put our soul into Wembley, with the certainty of quick returns. We forget that one day we shall be antiquities ourselves.

I do not suggest that there is anything to be done about it. Our malady is self-consciousness, and it is a malady almost certainly incurable, for it is only aggravated by remedies. Certainly it cannot be cured by such self-conscious reflections as these. Let us raise our hats, and let St. Paul's raise its dome, to the criticism of posterity.

EAVESDROPPING-IN

EVER since aviation became practical there has been urgent need for a judicial ruling as to whether a man owns his own air, and if so how much of it.

The question is not as simple as it looks. The right to pick up game that falls on one's own property does not touch the point ; that is only a question of landing rights. Apples hanging over from the garden next door are nearer the mark. But no lawyer has yet decided whether an aviator has a right to fly over my house, and if so how close : how far up in the air my property extends : whether the boundaries of it are perpendicular lines continuing the line of my garden wall (where it is perpendicular), or whether they diverge outwards from the centre of the earth. The more thoughtful of us have been pointing out this for a long time, but the Government has evaded the challenge, and fallen back on the fatal policy of muddling through.

That policy has brought its own Nemesis, as usual : we have no guiding principles about the ownership of the air, when it is becoming daily more imperative to find out who owns the ether. All this fuss about broadcast licences resolves itself, in the end, to a perfectly plain issue : does the ether belong to the tenant, the ground landlord, or the Government ?

This is a great outcry, I understand, over the

proposition that the Government should assume powers of search in private houses, so as to detect unlicensed wireless sets. But this is to begin at the wrong end. It is too late to start protesting against the right of search, with our doors scarred all over by the school inspector, the sanitary inspector, the gas, the rent, and the rest of their tribe. What we ought to be asking is whether, in the nature of the case, a private wireless set can be regarded as a contraband thing—whether, in fact, the broadcast licence has any right to exist. Why should a man need a licence to make use of his own property in a way that cannot possibly cause any annoyance to his neighbours? Granted the right of private property in ether, it is surely obvious that the B.B.C. is putting itself in a very questionable position by sending sound-waves through it. Why should we not recall the precedent of the railways, and demand heavy compensation? Or, at least, if we are content to forgo our claims here, a man must be allowed the right to bring down a sound-wave that is travelling over his own garden, just as if it were a pheasant.

Here the sophist interposes: "Yes, but a man must have a gun licence if he wants to bring down a pheasant, so why should he expect that he will be allowed to bring down a sound-wave without a licence for the valves and things he does it with?" The fallacy is patent. It is natural enough that the possession of *dangerous* objects should be licensed by the Government. Gun licences, dog licences, marriage licences—there is no difficulty about them; the acquisition of a gun

or a dog or a wife may be a danger to the public, and should not be lightly undertaken. The law may have a quarrel with me if I bring down a pheasant over my garden with a gun ; but it would have no grievance in the hardly less improbable event of my bringing it down with a boomerang. Those little gadgets people listen-in with do no harm to anybody except the listener. The experimental licence is, no doubt, a salutary institution, but the broadcast licence still needs arguments to justify it.

We have to pay (they will remind us) for our telephones. And what is listening-in but getting messages delivered to you by a great world-telephone ? Why should you not pay something for your calls ? But there is no real parity in the two cases. I pay for the telephone, because the messages which I get through it come down a lot of pieces of wire which belong to the post office. I pay because I can be cut off if I don't. The ancient Romans, when they sent a man into exile, described the process as " interdicting him fire and water." In our modern civilisation the same pressure can be brought to bear on the refractory householder : the gas and the water can be cut off. But these wireless messages come to me (I am told) through the ether. Well, if the Government thinks it owns the ether, it may bring pressure to bear on me when I put up an unlicensed wireless set. It may cut off my ether, if it wants to—send up a man with a barrow to take it away.

It will not do that, because it cannot ; and if it cannot, what right has it to complain ? The post office naturally objects to my using

its electricity without paying for it. But I am not using Uncle Caractacus's electricity when I listen-in. The electricity is my own, and so are the two stethoscopes and all the other little gadgets. Uncle Caractacus is *Vox et præterea nihil.* If he likes to let his voice wander about loose amongst my ether, what is to prevent me picking it up? Why, even if it were a swarm of bees I should have a legal right to take it, unless he followed behind keeping it in sight all the way.

The actual fact of the case is that Uncle Caractacus is making a public speech to his friends in such a way that I can overhear it. If he does not want me to overhear, he should do it somehow else. A Punch-and-Judy show may have its beat opposite my window, under police authorisation, but the police cannot make me contribute when the hat goes round. It is true that I have used artificial means to improve my powers of hearing when I listen-in, but in the same way I might watch the Punch-and-Judy show through opera-glasses. Why should I pay gate-money when there is no gate?

But (we shall be told) think of the chaos that would result if the Government did not grant a monopoly to the B.B.C.! Innumerable private firms would be broadcasting in competition, with the result that no one of them would be audible. By all means let the Government see to it that there is only one broadcasting concern. But the need for creating a monopoly does not involve the need of endowing it. If the thing cannot be carried on without Government aid, then let the Govern-

ment vote a subsidy, and recoup itself by putting a tax on wireless apparatus. That would be a consistent proceeding ; it would be like making the owners of motors pay for the upkeep of the roads. Those irritating friends who buy a new " set " every week and want you to come and look at it would be fortunately penalised. But do not let us have to pay for merely eavesdropping-in when they were broadcasting the result of the Test match. That is to penalise us for not stopping our ears when the town crier went on his rounds.

It is easy to say that difference between paying for a licence and paying an excess price for your instrument is only a difference of principle. But principle is, I take it, precisely what we wireless bootleggers, we cat-whisker burglars, are out for. We do not mind paying 10s. a year—pooh ! It is the principle we care about. If you make us pay higher prices for the stethoscopes and the bath salts, we will be patriots, and submit. But once you have allowed us to buy these things you can control us no longer. Is there property in ether ? Then we took it on in the lease along with the other fittings. Or is the ether everybody's property, like the air and the light ? In that case you cannot control our use of it except by an abuse of power no less odious than the window tax. We will not let you under the portcullis of the Englishman's castle ; we will see you jammed first.

Perhaps I have been letting the spirit of rhetoric run away with me a little ; for, as a matter of fact, I own no house, no garden, and no wireless set, and, above all things in the

world, I hate listening-in. But it is the boast of Hampden's fellow-countrymen that they will always spend their last penny in sticking up for somebody else's legal rights, from sheer love of an argument.

Besides, has wireless shot its bolt yet? Sometimes I wake up in the night and imagine that Signor Marconi is thinking out a way in which we can dispense with all this machinery, "this petty interchange of Earth and Air" (as Tennyson calls it), and listen-in all the time, everywhere, whether we want to or not, with the naked ear. Above the roaring of the express that carries you to Scotland you will be unable to avoid hearing the Prime Minister's speech in aid of the distressed dole-earners; tramping in the Cotswolds, you will never be out of earshot of the Savoy band.

When that happens I suppose we shall all have to wear cotton-wool in our ears, and never be able to take it out without taking out a licence. Well, I warn the B.B.C. that when that happens I shall jam.

WAXWORKS OR MEN?

MUCH more might have been written about the conflagration at Madame Tussaud's—is, in fact, going to be written about it, here and now. Did ever a public disaster happen so fraught with allegory, so provocative of a thousand whimsical allusions? For this was the true cathedral of London's childhood; hither, in perverted pilgrimage, our nursery-maids led us, willing devotees of an unreproved idolatry. Here not saints but sinners had their shrines and their legends; here even their relics were exposed, too sacred to be touched—the ropes, the weapons of death, the piece of toffee with which Mrs. What's-her-name poisoned the children. Magistrates had not then discovered that juvenile crime was the fruit of the penny dreadful, nor psychologists whispered that youth itself was wax. Complexes buzzed around us like germs in a telephone receiver: never mind, it was cheap at the price.

And now that hall of the Immortals in a blaze! "Why did you melt your waxen man, Sister Helen?"—here a thousand Keiths of Ewern guttered, with no little brother to ask questions: the poor mites were all in bed. How their mouths must have watered when they were told about it next morning; they,

to whom the immolation of a lead soldier was a hardly-won treat ! The irony of that night when Walhalla was turned into inferno, and *auto-da-fé* in which the world's sages and heroes perished together in effigy—did Mr. Lytton Strachey come out to see it ?

And those humbler figures, too, they shall not liquefy unrecorded. The dummy policeman, how true he stuck to his post, not less unmoved in death than the sentinel at Pompeii ! And she, too, even more deceptive to the untutored eye, the lady who sold programmes, did this unrehearsed item overtake her unannounced ? Or did some gallant fireman repeat amid the blinding fumes the mistake made by so many generations of children, heave her unresisting form over his shoulder under the illusion that she yet breathed, and, Pygmalion turned Æneas, bring her safely to the ground ?

Elsewhere the flames were more grimly appropriate. The Chamber of Horrors witnessed such horrors as Doré should have painted and Dante sung. The Rake's Progress (or what did they call it ?) never had a ghastlier setting ; the Newgate cell was broken open at last, and its condemned occupant was free, at last, to run ; Charles Peace, in dissolution, left no more traces than the crocodile left of Captain Hook.

But indeed, fate fell alike on deserving and undeserving ; Vulcan must punish even the righteous for keeping such nefarious company. The Sleeping Beauty, who might have prolonged for more than the allotted hundred years her artificial respiration, slept on heedless

and breathed her last. And close by she, the Foundress of the institute, Madame herself, might be seen, like Niobe on Sipylus, weeping stalactites over her short-lived progeny. What wonder, when even the Council of Versailles distilled waxen tears ? Oh, for Charles Lamb !

Interviewed, a member of the Tussaud family explained that the waxworks were not, in truth, an irreplaceable loss ; in most cases the moulds from which the casts were taken are still available. Provident Demiurge of a waxen creation, he had been careful of the type ; a Deucalion is left to repeople the wilderness left by the deluge. The relics have perished, mute and material things, but the human form divine will persist unaltered. The creator of Mrs. Jarley will sit where he sat eternally—only in a second edition.

And in course of time, no doubt, the indefatigable genius of the human mind will re-stock the Chamber of Horrors itself with fresh ropes, fresh knives, fresh pieces of toffee. The poisoners and garrotters of the future will still inspire future generations of children. "*Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem, fortunam ex aliis.*" Once more the old practical jokes will flourish ; the more absent-minded of us will find ourselves apologising to statues for having jostled them, and then apologising anew for having mistaken them for real people. I hope they will send me a card for the opening.

For indeed (the neglected Muse of Seriousness reminds me) there is no institution in London more salutary, more permanently needed, than Madame Tussaud's. The country

child, brought up to London for the week, must perforce see the Zoo first, with its insinuating Darwinian propaganda; the appealing eyes of the baboon, subtly laying claim to a long-lost brotherhood, disturbed him with their message, shamed him with unworthy suspicions of his origin: he came home from that pilgrimage a more thoughtful child, the monkey brand on his brow.

For an antidote to the poison of yesterday he must be taken to Madame Tussaud's, a temple of Positivism in which he might learn the multifarious greatness of Man. These good, worthy gentlemen in their frock coats, they had been what he was; he might become what they were, one day. His complexion, if he went to bed regularly at six, might retain (like theirs) its waxen colour; his teeth, if he washed them, that pearly whiteness. On the other side there was the awful warning of the Rake's Progress—no, not for Thomas!

To the more mature philosopher the spectacle of so much imitated life has its own exemplary value. The ancient Egyptians, it is well known, had a wooden representation of a dead man carried round on a bier at their banquets; it was shown to each of the guests, with the words: "Look on this as you eat and drink, and remember that, when you die, like this you will be." To us, in our world-weary age, it is more important to look at a waxwork and remember that this is what we might have been, and are not. We are very much like waxworks. When the Gauls conquered Rome, they found all the senators sitting motionless in the Curia, and took them for lifeless figures,

so that the whole assembly would have escaped massacre but for the small-boy instinct that prompted one of the invaders to pull a tempting-looking beard. We are very much like waxworks, but most fortunately we are not waxworks : an encouraging thought.

For really, in these days, is there not a conspiracy of defeatist propaganda all around us which will persuade us, unless we pinch ourselves very hard, that we are but wax ? That we are only automata at the best, reacting uniformly on certain stimuli, that operate like the placing of a penny in the slot ? These people who write the history of mankind, starting fair from a nebula or a jelly-fish, and just reaching Tut-ankh-Amen in an appendix at the end, what is their object but to persuade us that all the great pageant of history as we learned it is a marionette show, controlled by the strings of inexorable circumstance ; that Cleopatra was only a hairdresser's bust, and the Grand Monarque a tailor's model ? The statisticians, with their interminable calculations about coal and petrol, and the supply of food in relation to the population of the world, do they not picture mankind as a gigantic Madame Tussaud's, moulded by a formula and ready to melt ? For them " Out, brief candle ! " shall be all our epitaph. And, following them, the political prophets bid us sit like waxworks with folded hands, awaiting a general conflagration.

And the psychologists of the new determinism, are not they, too, plotting to add to our despairs ? To them, each of us is but a cast, wax to receive and marble to retain, whose

every lineament was traced before speech, or at least before reason, began. Our ends so shaped by the Tussaud-hand of early influences, we struggle through the rest of life, do we, modelled for all time, only creating the illusion of free will as the Sleeping Beauty created the illusion of life? Such, in the heart of it, is their message: they should have a street all to themselves, these new practitioners, and call it Jarley Street. Close behind, and in firm league with these, come the temperamental novelists, the young gentlemen who write books in Chelsea for Chelsea about Chelsea. "This is what you are all like!" they shout at us, and point us to pale, shock-haired men and rouged women making the Neuropath's Progress somewhere off the King's Road, in the hope that we shall mistake them for real life. And we shall become like them, too, if we are not careful; it is the curse of an overwritten age that it models itself on its own waxworks.

A friend of mine has an aunt (this is fact, in spite of my record), who has no great admirations in literature except for the works of Charles Dickens. To manifest which, it has been her habit to make pilgrimage once a year to Madame Tussaud's, stand there in front of his effigy, and say aloud, "Thank you, Mr. Dickens." (Cranmer, I take it, would have called this idolatry.) The genius who could so animate his literary puppets as to make his world want to live is fitly thus honoured even in wax. For myself, I will make the same pilgrimage now and again, and say to the unresponsive models, "Thank goodness, I am

not you ! Better to be what I am than be a wax Napoleon, better look as I look than be a Sleeping Beauty who never wakes ! Even if I follow the Rake's Progress, I shall at least do it of my own free choice, and not because Messrs. Tussaud put me there." And so I will go away inspirited, and reverencing this admirable piece of dustwork, which is Man.

TIME, CHANGE, AND EASTER

EVERY now and then somebody wants to alter the dating of Easter. I suppose it is in our blood, for our Anglo-Saxon fathers seem to have had a fad of their own upon the point, and fixed their Easter on some odd Asiatic principle, until at last they very sensibly decided that these things were ordered better in Rome. But we have nothing to do with those mumpsimizers of the past ; to-day, it is the itch for innovation that impels the outcry. Life would be so much simpler, we are told, contain so much less of calendar-hunting and of holiday settling, if Easter would come the same day every year (let us call it April 12th for the sake of example) instead of going up and down like the franc. The Easter Bank Holiday, they say, would always come at the same time of year, and therefore we should know what kind of weather to expect on it. (A paltry argument, this last ; already it is very doubtful whether the sun's orbit has not slipped a clutch somehow, to give us these autumnal Februaries and the rigours of the late March.) But anyhow, we should know where we were.

For myself, I have never been able to master the secret of these variations. Those of us who were brought up to while away dull sermon-times with the Book of Common Prayer (not Grey Books, nor Green Books, but the genuine old-fashioned article, preferably

dating from Queen Adelaide) knew, indeed, that there was a Table at the beginning of it for determining the date of the movable feasts, and that something called a Golden Letter came into it. (I wonder are they trying to alter it into a Grey Letter or a Green Letter now ?) But the less mathematically-minded of us gave it up after one or two attempts, and tried our luck with the Forms of Prayer to be Used by Those at Sea. When people explain it to you, they tell you that the moon has something to do with it. It would be like her feminine fickleness. But there has been little encouragement to study her moods since the time when she gave disgraceful facilities to the air raids. No, it is a mystery, this variability of Easter, and (as Mrs. Green would say) better lef' so.

For indeed there is a pleasant, old-world spaciousness about the way Easter drives a coach-and-four through the red-tape of the almanac. Like the ten o'clock express from York (is it not ?), round which all the other trains in Bradshaw must needs revolve as satellites, Easter dominates the situation : make way, please, for Ash Wednesday, her whiffler, for Pentecost and the other feasts, her after-riders ! She must disturb the whole currency of the calendar, till the poor Sundays after Pentecost find themselves bankrupt, and have to stabilise their credit by a sudden loan from the Sundays after Epiphany.

In all right-minded men there is a hatred of order and a love of mess, which finds constant satisfaction in two public institutions, a movable Easter and a non-decimal coinage. For these, to the unmathematical mind at least,

mean two constant surprises in the nature of things ; and life, in this imperfect world of ours, is only to be measured by surprises.

They talk about the prolongation of life, but who wants it ? What we want is the prolongation of youth. And nothing kills youthfulness like routine. Grey hairs spring, not from the furrow of honest labour, but from the rut of monotony. You, who climb five or six times a day up the same flight of stairs, do you not feel old age creeping over you ? That is because you always go up those stairs the same way. When the stairs take a right-about turn, I will wager you always take a right-about turn too. Precisely ; and the result is stagnation. Take a left-about turn instead now and again (it is just as easy), and preserve your youth. Or, better still, when the mood takes you, walk up on the wrong side of the banisters, if you have good firm banisters. It is habit that ages us ; to resist age, you must avoid ruts of action, and equally ruts of the time-table.

A few years since we instituted an excellent plan for dodging the monotony of the daily round. We decided, very sensibly, that we would vary our habits of rising in the morning ; we would let the light wake us, as it streamed through the windows of our bedroom and spring out of bed a whole hour earlier than custom dictated. Early rising, for the summer months, should be a corporate hobby of ours, a national caprice. What better way of ensuring that the blood should still run fresh in our veins than getting up early, like young lovers, to greet the return of spring ?

And then we went and spoilt it! We went through a solemn farce of altering our watches, and so trying to cheat ourselves into the idea that all was going on as usual. As a result, the whole rejuvenating effect of daylight saving has been lost, except by those who (like myself) never consent to alter their watches.

One of the most admirable parodies in Mr. Max Beerbohm's "Christmas Garland," "Out of Harm's Way," deserves to be quoted here. "There were times when he was sorely tempted to regret a little that some of the feasts of the Church were movable. True, they moved only within strictly prescribed limits, and in accordance with certain unalterable, wholly justifiable rules. Yet, in the very fact that they did move, there seemed—to use an expressive slang phrase of the day—something not quite nice. It was the fixed feasts that pleased Percy best"—of course they did; that was Percy all over. But to those rightly-constituted minds that view the prospect of growing up with a kind of peter-panic, these seasonable eccentricities of the calendar recommend themselves as a salutary jolt, have something of the thrill that is imparted by the wiggle-woggle. One day, one week, one month, may be very much like another, for the jaded slaves of the office, the shop, and the schoolroom. But one year is not like another, while we have to take down Old Moore to find out whether our Easter holiday will see the daffodils wriggling dubiously out of their sheathes or the hedgerows bursting into full leaf. All praise to mutability! Spenser wrote six books of the longest epic the world ever wants to see, but when he attempted

a seventh in dispraise of mutability he died.

Even those who ask for longevity, not for length of juvenility, must go to change for the satisfying of their need. Who does not know that time itself has no length, but is what man makes of it? (I mean for practical purposes; you shall get no Kantian nonsense from me.) They tell me that the other day an unfortunate witness in a law court was asked what he thought the duration of a minute felt like; that is to say, they timed him by the watch, and he, not even allowed to count in his head, had to pronounce when he thought the minute was up. His minute lasted (I am told) 113 seconds at the first test, and 7 seconds when he tried again. Not a very good performer, evidently; but you try it on friends, and see how near they get.

Time, then, is what we make of it; and it is too bald a commonplace to need stating that monotony, while it makes hours seem long, makes years seem short. You, who are reading this article in your local train on the London, Dover, and Ipswich—or are you reading it? I watched you a fortnight ago, and you looked to me as if you were skipping it—are reading it to while away the intolerable tedium of an hour's journey to Somewhere. But this hideous daily train-grind, that makes two hours of your day seem an eternity, makes ten years of your life pass with the speed of a twelvemonth. And nothing is responsible for it but lack of incident, the tyranny of the rut.

Who can doubt that the brief years will fly quicker for miserable men if each is turned out

on the same pattern as the last, with Easter Monday always at the middle of April, and Whit Monday always at the end of May? Why, they will be wanting to make the week match the month next—starting fair with January 1st as a Monday, and treating December 31st as a bye, so that we shall never again wonder what day of the week the 17th of last month was! You might as well go for a walking tour in the Fens.

Even as it is, we cannot all take our movable Easter in the same spirit of adventure. We cannot, with calendars becoming so cheap, achieve the sudden illumination of that country vicar who (it is fabled) gave out in his notices "To-day is Easter Day; last Friday was Good Friday, but, as it was overlooked, it will be kept next Friday." But if Easter is not a permanent surprise, at least it is a permanent anomaly. It introduces into our drab lives a saving element of the incalculable. Look here—Easter this year was April 12th, next year it will be the 4th, the year after that the 17th, the year after that the 8th. What can be the principle of it all? The last time we had Easter on April 12th was in 1914. *Absit omen.* Also, there seems to be no Epact in 1930, only an asterisk, with no reference at the bottom of the page. It beats me.

THE TRAVELLER'S BIBLE

I SUPPOSE it must have been Bishop Stubbs—it is always safest, in any case, to attribute ecclesiastical stories to him—who told the school children that a Bishop's life was a very busy one, and he had to be continually hurrying this way and that, visiting remotest parts of his diocese—you know the story, of course ? Oh, very well then. But there was one book, he said, which he always kept by him, the guide of all his movements, the chart of all his journeyings : now, could they tell him what the name of that book was ? It began with a B. (What, you do know it ? Well, it's too late now.) No, children, not the Bible ; it's called "Bradshaw."

Why should not Bradshaw have his panegyric, the Bible of the traveller ? The authentic, original source of information—not those boiled-down things that wrest the plain sense of the word, heresy-mangled documents. Away, I say, with all such ! All true travellers will have recourse, scholar-like, to the original ; well knowing that these peptonised substitutes, if they reveal to him the next stage in his journey, will give him no hint of the next but one, or the next after that. Beware of them.

These thoughts are evoked in me by the fact that I am staying at a house which possesses a copy of Bradshaw's Railway Time

Tables of the date 1840. It is a favourite pastime, when visitors are in a hurry to leave, to greet them with the familiar formula, "A Bradshaw? Oh, yes, I can find it for you. . . . It's not this month's, but the service doesn't change much up here," and so present them anon with the thirty duodecimo pages that were Bradshaw to our great-grandfathers. The joke is apt to fall flat in the hurry of the moment; and yet, what hallowed memories the book contains! Not unjustly is it put away, from time to time, among the Stuart relics.

For this opuscule, too, in its day, was doubtless the purchase of some hurried pilgrim. "Dearest Angelina," said her mother, looking up from the tambour-frame, "in scarce three weeks from now your father and I are to take train by the Grand Junction Railway from Whitmore. Be so good as to send a letter by the general post to Mr. Bradshaw, of 27, Brown Street, Manchester, and procure a copy of his railway time tables." And so in due course the little plum-coloured volume arrived, to be pored over with heaven knows what shaking of ringlets: "Dearest Mamma, I think you are holding it the wrong way up"—bless them!

It was no monthly event, in those days, the appearance of the immortal *vade mecum*; consequently, no allusion to "Fifth Month" instead of "May" divulges its Quaker origin. Future editions are, however, envisaged: "G. Bradshaw would feel particularly obliged by an intimation being forwarded to him of any change in fares or times of departure on any

of the lines, in order that the correction may be immediately made in the work." ("The work" is good.) The railway companies were obliging, it seems, "on which account the information may be depended upon as being correct and authentic. The necessity of such a work is so obvious as to need no apology"—a perfect phrase: why has this preface disappeared from modern editions?

It cannot, however, be supposed that the work was exhaustive. The maps, which occupy eight pages of the thirty, show a London and Cambridge Railway and a Great Western Railway to which there is no reference in the text, and you will only find tiny, tucked-away allusions to the possibility of reaching Croydon or Basingstoke. A Manchester man, G. Bradshaw seems to have felt that the trains which Lancashire caught to-day the world might catch to-morrow. Manchester and Liverpool, Birmingham, Derby, Sheffield, Nottingham—these are all we know on earth and all we need to know. London to Birmingham in four hours, and only another four on from Birmingham to Manchester—how Angelina must have complained of the busy, hustling times she lived in!

Though, indeed, it looks as if the carriage-folk of the period must have regarded the railways as little better than a kind of auxiliary steam. "Carriages and horses should be at the stations a quarter of an hour before the time of departure," and elsewhere "Gentlemen riding in their own carriages charged second-class fares," which seems to imply that in those brave days you hitched your wagon to a

truck, and Angelina's crinoline might be conveyed from door to door without ever facing the terrors of the foot-board.

Let it not be thought, however, that the railways were indifferent to the comfort of their humbler travellers. "The mixed trains consist of first-class carriages, carrying six inside, and of second-class carriages *open* at the side, without linings, cushions, or divisions in the compartments. The night mail consists of first-class carriages carrying six inside, and of second-class carriages *closed*, and entirely protected from the weather." Nor did the company's thoughtfulness stop even there. "Each carriage has a small roof lamp by day and night." I know those lamps, and the line they travel on nowadays, but it would not do to name it here.

In some ways, indeed, things were freer and easier then than now. "Passengers are especially recommended to have their names and address, or destination, *legibly written* on each part of their luggage, when it will be placed on the top of the coach in which they ride, unless it be in a bag or such other package as may conveniently be taken under the seats inside, opposite the one they occupy." Yes, opposite is best, especially if one has a suit-case that projects slightly. "No gratuity, under any circumstances, is allowed to be taken by any member of the company." Ha! "All the company's servants are strictly enjoined, on pain of dismissal, to observe the utmost civility and attention towards all passengers." Ha! again. But do not think it was roses, roses all the way. "No smoking

is allowed at the stations, or in the company's carriages." You might suppose, after that, that there was not likely to be any mention of refreshments either ; but you would be wrong. "Ten minutes are allowed at Wolverton Station, where a female is in attendance, and refreshments may be obtained." Oh, female at Wolverton ! Did you ever foresee the long line of females that was to follow you, those haughty, Bath-bunless, shingled sisters of yours in the days to come ?

Sic fortis Etruria crevit ; and we, as we fly cushioned through space, plentifully regaled with celery and watercress, we, as we strap-hang back to the familiar suburb, knee-deep in girl guides, we, as we read about the latest demand for a fifty-per-cent rise, or examine those curious little vouchers they send to shareholders (be covered ! I am one)—can we refuse the passing tribute of a sigh to this earlier Bradshaw, with its simple triumphs, its artless confidences ?

"Passengers leaving Preston at 6.27 and Wigan at 7.0, going to Liverpool and Manchester, will be detained at Parkside nearly half an hour." Fair warning, you see ; none of those little curling lines with which the modern time table confuses us. At least, life was more leisurely then ; the most exacting of aunts could hardly expect you to pay a flying visit to Manchester when you had to start at 8.0 in order to arrive at 6.15 ; visits were more leisurely affairs, preaching engagements (I take it) less recklessly thrown at you. And yet there were Sunday trains, on some lines at least—Sabbath trains, I should say, in

deference to the shade of Mrs. Proudie. Yes, perhaps the intolerable unsettlement which steam has introduced into our lives had begun already.

Meanwhile, if the development of the railways has added to our daily despairs, it has also inflated that frog-Bradshaw of eighty-five years ago into the ox-Bradshaw of to-day, that noble volume which all of us, if we thought the matter over with proper deliberation, would pack next to the Bible in our desert-island bookshelf. Nowhere else, assuredly, can Fancy roam so free; nothing else affords the same opportunity for solitary pastime.

The game of putting an imaginary traveller down at Cheltenham and finding his quickest route to Cambridge; the game of reading through the hotel advertisements and finding out what is really wrong with each; the game (better than either) of choosing a page at random, covering the top with your hands, and guessing from the names of the stations which county you have strayed into. This last is my favourite—one moment, while I get a modern Bradshaw. . . Is there such a thing as a Bradshaw in the house? No, not that—a Bradshaw. Thank you. Now, look here: "Stoke Canon, Brampford Speke, Thorverton, Up Exe Halt, Cadeleigh"—could there be any doubt where that was? Or again, not less unmistakable, "Long Marton, Newbiggin, Culgaith, Langwathby, Little Salkeld, Lazonby and Kirkoswald, Armathwaite, Cotehill, Cumwhinton." Or even this: "Hardingham, Thuxton, Yaxham, Dereham, Wendling, Fransham, Dunham, Swaffham, Norborough and

Pentney." I will not insult the reader's intelligence by supplying the answers.

I see, by the way, that I have forgotten to mention the fares charged in 1840. I am afraid it must be admitted that you had to pay a pound (pre-war) to go from London to Birmingham in a second-class coach, open at the sides. You paid five shillings extra at night, to be entirely protected from the weather. Perhaps modern life has its compensations.

IMMORTALITY BY ACCIDENT

NO Etonian can remain unmoved by the reassurance which was in the paper the other day that the land round Stoke Poges churchyard, where Gray elegised, has been bought up and made over to one of these Please-do-not-walk-on-the-grass Trusts.

For myself, I have made the pilgrimage as an Etonian on foot. But from every point of view it is a preservable place ; were we not all brought up on the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" long before tender ear or intellect could appreciate its splendid cadences of sound and thought ? No, I am not being cynical. Only the other day a friend of mine, aged twelve perhaps, bidden by a master to memorise the opening stanzas, reproduced the third thus :—

> Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
> The moping owl does to the moon complain
> Of such as, wandering near her secret bowler,
> Molest her ancient solitary reign

Nearly right, you see, but not quite : one mark off, on our schoolmaster reckoning. I say we did not know it till long afterwards for the perfect thing it is, but that ivy-mantled tower made a landmark in all our histories ; we accepted it as part of the tradition.

And now it is to be spared, at least from the greedy tentacles of the bungalow builder. Greater London will grow up round Stoke

Poges, but leave there a little island of sentiment. In a sense, of course, such piety is misplaced piety; you cannot really "preserve" a piece of the countryside by running a paling round it and putting up notices to say that sandwich-paper is not to be left about. Villagers are not Red Indians, that they should be cooped up like deer; you will preserve a patch of ground, but you will not preserve the village churchyard as an institution. The rude forefathers will sleep on, but they will not be the forefathers of the young couples who now live in Acacia Avenue close by. The continuity of the village life will be gone; and, moreover, the spirit of the countryside will be gone; country which is preserved ceases to be country. I walked along Waggoner's Wells once, on the hottest of summer days, and a set of notices put up by (I fancy) this same well-meaning Trust, kept assuring me that I would be arrested if I bathed without a costume. All very well, no doubt; but discouraging for the hamadryads.

You lose the continuity of the tradition, and the graveyard itself becomes the graveyard of a graveyard. The essential atmosphere of rusticity which pervades the Elegy will be recalled no longer by the real fact. Unless, indeed, we rewrite the Elegy itself to suit these altered conditions, as :—

> And drowsy tinklings lull the distant trams

(I like the idea of a conductor lulling a tram), or

> Their niblick oft the stubborn glebe has broke.

No fresh generations of bumpkins will be

interred at Stoke Poges, unless we intend to import them specially from Dorsetshire. There will be no life (if I may be permitted the paradox) about a graveyard like that.

I forbear to speak of the still more perverse institution on the other side of the Atlantic which (if the papers are to be trusted) means to build an exact replica of the church on the soil of Freedom. That surely is pig-headed ; we want to preserve Stoke Poges, not because it is more beautiful than two out of every three country churchyards, but because it does happen to be the one where Gray wrote his Elegy. But the American replica, even Hegelians must admit, will not be the one where Gray wrote his Elegy. You might as well have a model of the pen " In Memoriam " was written with.

However, by all means let us have a green ring round Eton. Windsor Park and the Playing Fields make a start, and philanthropic (or should we call them misanthropic ?) subscriptions like this will plant a fresh set of outposts against the advance of the bungalocracy. There is no reason why the thing should stop here ; Milton lived for a time at Horton—saw from it, indeed, the " towers and battlements bosomed high in tufted trees " of " L'Allegro " ; that, too, should be worth preserving. And has the Vicarage of Bray no glebe attached to it ? Upon my word, we will make Harrow look suburban yet. (By the way, I was there the other day, and a young man told me I should find the house I was looking for " at the top of the slope." Harrow-on-the-Slope ! A name to be remembered.)

But what a strange thing is this immortality the Muses bestow! Here is this tuppenny-ha'penny village, ridiculously called Stoke Poges, with a church exactly like all the other churches round, if memory serves me—Farnham and Burnham and Upton and the rest; a churchyard is attached to it, and here the village undertaker, who "when the time is seasonable will furnish with afflictions sore and marble urns and cherubim at prices very low and reasonable," puts away Hobbs, Nobbs, Noakes, and Stokes, *indiscretum atque innumerabile vulgus*, and there, you would think, is the end of them. "Also of Martha Jane, widow of the above"—what curious eyes will ever trouble to decipher the stuff?

And then your poet fellow comes along; a ploughman in the field, an owl in the belfry tickle his fancy; out comes the pencil, is sucked awhile, writes, erases; then a thought occurs—these villagers who are buried here, how odd it is, nobody caring a rap who they were or how they lived! The pencil runs more smoothly now; the immortal thing has begun. The immortal thing which, centuries afterwards, will make char-a-bancs full of tourists gape at the short and simple annals of Martha Jane, scrape moss reverentially from Noakes' tombstone. And all this, not in spite of Stoke Poges being just like any other village, but *because* Stoke Poges is just like any other village; there would be no point in the Elegy else.

Mark you, moreover, the chances were a thousand to one against the Elegy being written or published. If ever a man was an

idler, it was Thomas Gray. Look at his life, what a monument of indolence! He refused to accept a job as attaché to the Embassy at Lisbon; refused even to become Poet Laureate, although they offered to let him off writing complimentary poems to Royalty. Not his to spurn delights and live laborious days! Why, to the scandal of all of us scribblers, he would not even let Dodsley pay him for the Elegy! This was not Milton's spirit, who, I take it, would not have given us "Paradise Lost" but that he was hard up for five pounds.

An idle man! "Oft have we seen him at the peep of day"—I doubt it; probably a poetical conceit. Why, in his "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" he speaks of "the slumbers light that fly the approach of morn." Such a man, depend upon it, had never been in time for Early School. And as a poet, idle in the extreme. I took down his works this morning, and, having a quarter of an hour to waste, I read them—with difficulty, the printers having spread him out into 164 sprawling pages; a good half of that consists of translations. Of the twenty-one original poems, no less than four are fragments.

There, then, he sits on the wall of Stoke Poges Churchyard, pencil on tongue. Could anybody have foreseen that, for once, he would turn out not a finished poem merely, but the most finished poem of the world? Infinitely more probable that he will make a paper boat out of that manuscript, or, if he preserves it, it will go down to posterity as "Fragment of an Elegy intended to be written in a country churchyard"; it will end "The

Cock's shrill clarion " dot dot dot. And if that happens, mark you, Gray will go down to history as one of the multitudinous nearly-successful poets in that country churchyard of English literature, the eighteenth century. He will be, perhaps, a graceful legend at Eton, something like William Johnson, and the sonnet to Richard West will appear in anthologies, that is all.

That will be Thomas Gray, and what of Stoke Poges? Stoke Poges will be nothing, remembered only as a ludicrous name, to be pronounced in the same breath with Toller Porcorum. And the Rector may whistle for subscriptions if he wants to fence in that undistinguished little graveyard of his. Instead of which, just because the poem was finished and faultlessly finished, those mute, inglorious Miltons whom the author commiserated for their obscurity have become immortal! Not in their lifetime, no Masefield shall chronicle their sordid loves; not in their deaths, no Housman shall congratulate them on the neatness of their suicide. No, in their coffins these obscure old gaffers shall be inviolable, because a poet, passing by, " gave to misery all he had, a tear " ; and that tear has become an enormous glass case to put over the lot of them. So they will sleep undisturbed, when we have made Kensal Green into an aerodrome, and a Sanitary Commission has dispeopled Westminster of its dead.

IS IT TWILIGHT?

THERE is a certain pathos about the reappearance, in a new edition, of a book we were all talking about twenty years ago, "When It Was Dark," by Guy Thorne. Partly because best-sellers do not demand, and commonly do not deserve, such reviviscence: they come into the world labelled "Perishable." Partly because the author himself is dead, and the juvenile vigour of the book reads, now, as an anachronism. Partly because towards the end of his life the author became a Catholic, and it is very probable that, were he alive, he would have wanted to alter a touch here and there in retractation of his Anglican utterances.

The book figured so prominently in the conversation of the time that there is no need to recall the argument of it except in bare outline. A Jewish financier, inspired by a secret hatred of Christianity, bribes an expert archæologist to fake what seems conclusive evidence against the story of the Resurrection. A tablet is hidden in a tomb at Jerusalem, putting it on record that Joseph of Arimathea removed the Sacred Body and reburied it on the first Holy Saturday. The effect of this announcement, which is unhesitatingly accepted as genuine by all the experts, upon the world at large, and upon England in particular, is described with great plausibility. The plot is finally unmasked through the agency of a hero-curate, whose

work is made considerably easier for him by the disclosures of an actress who had been the archæologist's mistress. And so the financier goes mad, the archæologist is lynched by an angry mob, and the world wags on, the better (if anything) for its nine days' relapse into paganism.

The " formula " of the book was one which any author would have given his eyes to hit upon for himself, and the recipe built up round the formula was a perfect recipe for the best-seller. We shall not look upon its like again. It was a religious work, and the British public has a taste for religion—in books. It had, further, a faint aroma of the *demi-monde*—there was at least one strong scene in it, or what we used to consider a strong scene twenty years back—and any combination of religion with a faint aroma of the *demi-monde* gets the British public where it lives. It was a problem-book, a suitable opening for conversation with suddenly introduced strangers. It was a conspiracy story—editors and Prime Ministers hurried to and fro in cabs, in the style of William le Queux. It introduced echoes, too, of living personalities, always a popular trick ; the famous Agnostic authoress, Mrs. Hubert Armstrong, was the most recognisable of these. Did it want any further breeze to puff its sales ? If so, an episcopal Æolus, preaching in Westminster Abbey, supplied the necessary impetus.

How far Guy Thorne took his own creations seriously was a question often asked, and never (in my hearing) authoritatively answered. His earlier work had not been pronouncedly clerical in tone. But it is fair to

assume that, even if he made terms with his literary conscience in writing down to the many-headed, he said what he thought and what he thought would do good. In any case, he knew his atmosphere well enough for his own purpose. He was himself, unless my memory deceives me, a son of the manse, whose father had ministered in the "sham Perpendicular" church not far from Manchester, to which the first chapter introduces us—was it, I wonder, the church which was described by its incumbent, in answering a set of Visitation questions, as "inclined to be Gothic"?

What a delight it is, in the parlour of some wayside inn, fringed with portraits of the local hunt and certificates of admission to the Ancient Order of Buffaloes, to come across a cache of shockers that recall a bygone day! How delightfully out of date are those realistic touches which the author put in specially in the effort to be modern! I have met, before now, an early Le Queux which described a smart house-party in (I suppose) the late nineties: "All the ladies," said my author, "and most of the gentlemen had brought their machines with them, and many was the enjoyable spin we had in the vicinity."

You will find little attraction of this kind in "When It Was Dark"; it is still too new to be a feast for the antiquarian. But the question naturally forces itself upon the imagination—Is the picture still true? The book was meant to ask what would happen if apparently convincing disproof of the Resurrection were launched on the world and the England of that day. In so far as its guesses were accurate, do

they remain accurate still? Or does the modern reader say to himself emphatically: "This cannot have been meant for 1925"?

Such accuracy could hardly be expected in the domain of international politics. The author did not shrink from tracing the consequences of the "discovery" even here, and they really provide some quite good Oppenheim reading. Indeed, the climax of the horror is reached when a newspaper leader informs us that Consols are down to 65. I cannot help feeling that the author of "The Hypocrite" was guilty of conscious satire here. The real complaint which the general public had against Joseph of Arimathea was that he had endangered the British Raj in India. The really stunning effect produced by the shattering of an immemorial faith was its effect on the money market. Nor does the High Church leader, Sir Michael Manichoe (who is hardly even an echo of Lord Halifax) disdain to buy Consols heavily, having private information that the Resurrection is still credible. What a chance missed, anyhow, for the satirist! But the idea of a threatened Jehad all over the East and of an obscurantist Russia preparing to proclaim a holy war against infidel England by way of the Khyber Pass—such ideas belong to a bygone order of panic. The map of the world has been too thoroughly overhauled in these last ten years to let the modern reader catch his breath at such possibilities.

But what of the more immediate effects of the hoax upon the moral and spiritual condition of England? In the book Catholics as a body

and the High Church movement treat the alleged find as an imposture ; the attitude of most other Anglicans is doubtful or worse ; the Free Churches, too, except, for their more old-fashioned members, are inclined to go the way of that respectable person who wondered whether it was too late to make it up with the devil. As a result, the whole moral tone of the nation is, in a moment, changed incalculably for the worse. The statistics of criminal assaults, for example, which only go up by 8 per cent in the Southern counties of Ireland, go up nearly 200 per cent in England and Wales ; and all this is the work of a few weeks. Now, if a writer of to-day were to treat the same subject, would he venture to suggest that an apparent disproof of the Resurrection would have, in our England, effects so catastrophic and so far-reaching ?

It is easy to say, " Yes, but nowadays we have learned to believe in the Resurrection in a spiritual sense, without troubling our heads over the empty Tomb." True enough, the theologians of Protestantism have been busy, these last twenty years, in trying to demobilise public sentiment on the subject of miracles. But these distinctions are, for the most part, the property of a clerical clique. Modernism can never be a religion of the people ; it is a parasitic growth, which draws its life from the orthodoxy it labours to destroy. The vast mass of English people can be divided into those who believe in the Empty Tomb and those who have no effective belief in the Resurrection at all.

Twenty years ago there may have been, as

the book suggests, a large body of English people who, without being much of churchgoers, still retained their belief in the Resurrection, and ordered their lives by that belief—so strictly, that the loss of that belief meant, for many of them, instantaneous moral shipwreck. I say, there may have been ; but it became a commonplace during the war that the effective force of religion had, in the earlier years of the century, been greatly over-estimated.

But to-day, is it not one's instinct to suggest that the picture is no longer true ? If, in reality, such a hoax were played off on the world to-day, would its effect on the life and thought of England really be so marked ? In my nightmares I can see such a "discovery," in the England of to-day, being treated as a nine days' wonder and forgotten. And is that because we have achieved a higher, purer faith ? Or is it that we already disbelieve the Resurrection, without having disproved it, and that the decay of morals, still arrested by powerful forces of tradition, is setting in slowly instead of breaking out suddenly ? And that the shocker of yesterday has an almost satirical message for an age when it is Twilight ?

THE CUCKOO

I AM not in the habit of writing Nature Notes, because, although there is an encyclopædia available, it is such a nuisance cutting the pages. But the cuckoo deserves to be sung in deathless journalism for its many gifts to mankind, and chiefly for the ease with which its cry is distinguished from that of other birds. I believe even you Londoners would recognise it, though, of course, you know nothing about the cuckoo except that you can get there by Metropolitan. (I want to write a pathetic story about a little boy who thought that trees were all blue and flowers were all cubical, because he had never been to the country, but only seen it on the Underground posters.)

I know it is not the right time of year for my subject : the well-trained journalist writes his article a fortnight before St. George's Day. But we country folk find it really occupies our minds, not in those early days of spring, when we suddenly exclaim : " Ha ! the cuckoo ! " but in June, when he starts at three in the morning, and never shows any particular inclination to stop.

He is not, of course, a popular figure in bird mythology. He is criticised for his drastic way of overcoming the housing problem—a method which would hardly be tolerated even in Glasgow. Schoolmasters, in particular, feel strongly about his persistent attempts to board

out his family without paying any fees. La Fontaine, if he had been a schoolmaster, would have given us an excellent fable about the cuckoo-parents who put their boy out to nurse with a lark family, and then came down and complained of the small progress he was making with his singing lessons.

But perhaps, after all, the bird has been misjudged. I, certainly, was always under the impression that it shirked the duty of nidification from sheer idleness ; whereas I see from Facciolati's Latin Lexicon that the reason is far less discreditable. The bird (says my author) knows that it is very unpopular with all the other birds (professional jealousy, no doubt, among musical temperaments), and that if it did build a nest all the others would come and pull it to pieces. If this is true, the problem of " What to do with Our Sons " must be a difficult one to solve, and we should think twice before we blame it for its want of home life.

The fascinating thing about the bird is its curious uniqueness. We recognise that in common language ; people tell you (or write to the papers to say) that they have heard the cuckoo ; they do not tell you that they have seen the lamb, or that they have picked the primrose, or that they have caught the cold ; the cuckoo alone, among all the harbinger of spring, remains obstinately singular. One never sees the word in the plural—would it be cuckoos or cuckooes ? Both look silly. We talk in the same way about the nightingale ; but, then, the nightingale has performed for the B.B.C., and the cuckoo never has. No ; there

is something solitary about the cuckoo, as there was about the phœnix. You may be within earshot of two or even three at once, but they are always at a wide distance from each other ; each has its own beat, apparently, and sticks to it.

It is here that I take a personal interest in the affair. I always spend a good deal of the summer imitating the cuckoo by blowing into my hands. In non-feathered biped circles the turn has been something of a success ; nor can I forbear to mention yet again the young lady of three who greeted her first experience of the genuine article with shouts of " Fa'er Knox ! " Cows, too, will gather round to listen, a compliment which they do not pay to the regular performer. Why is it that cows never take any notice of the birds, yet will stand as motionless as a grand opera audience to admire human music ? But the attitude of the bird itself is far more difficult to determine. Several times it has been attracted to the spot ; I will not describe the best instance of this, because it is not the sort of thing one believes in print. But more often it either flies away or sits in pensive silence, cocking its head in a suspicious way. Does it think that it has strayed on to a neighbour's beat, or that an unauthorised rival is trespassing on its own ? I have known it fly away with a series of disapproving clucks, much more like a maiden aunt than a cuckoo.

But this uniqueness attaches to the species, not merely to the individual bird. Why, for example (since the Greeks and the Latins were familiar with his existence), did he never pass into a legend ? You may read all through

Ovid's Metamorphoses (if you have the leisure) without finding any record of his sad story. Yet it would not have been difficult. Coccyx, I take it, was a noble youth, who was kept on a short allowance by his parsimonious father. To supplement this he used to betake himself to the seaside every year in the month of August. Here he would disguise his ivory face with soot, and sing songs in public, to the delight of all except his next-door neighbours, who were exasperated beyond measure (for the walls of seaside lodging-houses were thin in those days) by his persistent efforts to practise the scale. One year—an unfortunate year for him—the adjoining rooms were taken by Jupiter, then travelling under one of his discreditable aliases. The patience of the god was soon worn out by the monotonous performance, and he turned the unhappy young man into a grey bird, with the additional disqualification (1) that he should always be homeless ; (2) that he should sing on two notes only ; (3) that his voice should get worse and worse as the month of July wore on, until in August, for very shame, he had to migrate overseas.

But after all that is only a legend. What light do the cold ratiocinations of science throw on the mystery of the cuckoo ? I am hanged if I know. It is all very well to talk about the survival of the fittest ; but how did a bird with a voice that gave it away like that ever manage to survive ? How could it ever escape its natural foes, or how could its natural prey ever fail to escape it ? Why, alone of birds, has it never learned to husband its ridiculous singing powers, instead of lacerating its vocal

chords until they fade away into paroxysms of whooping-cough? No man ever heard a hoarse lark, a hoarse nightingale; yet either (you would think) must be more pestered by Dame Nature for encores. Why, on the other hand, alone of birds, has it realised that August is the right month for leaving England if you have a weak chest?

Upon my word, if it were not so old-fashioned, I should believe that the bird was sent here for a moral purpose. For, after all, what better satire could you have on our own generation than the young cuckoo—his relentless attitude of "Get on or get out" towards his slow-hatching foster-brothers; his complete lack of *mauvaise honte* at finding himself a foreigner in their midst; his conviction that the loudest solo, however monotonous, must be most pleasing to the public ear; the ease, finally, with which we accept him at his own valuation, forget his shady antecedents and welcome him as a long-standing institution? A certain school of economics might press the moral further home, and suggest that we do ill to prevent our neighbours laying eggs in their own nests, thus forcing them to come and lay in ours; congratulating ourselves the while on the employment which he provides to father and mother lark in the hatching of them. But that would border on controversy. Let us call ourselves instead Nephelococcygia, a land where the inhabitants are always up in the clouds, and all the prizes go to the cuckoos. Or should it be cuckooes?

Meanwhile, I am pleased to notice that the bird's voice is going already. "Cookookoo,

cookookookoo, cook ! ''—I could do it better myself. Am I right, perhaps, in thinking that it gets paid out for the miserable pushfulness and efficiency of its origins by the consciousness, all through June and July, that it is a figure of fun ? Does it overhear, too proud to seem to overhear, the whispered criticisms which come from the rest of the bird-choir : " My dear, did you ever *hear* anything like that last note ? He can't even manage the interval ! Tiu-tiu-tiu-tio ! Well, I suppose we ought to be charitable, and thank Providence that it doesn't happen to us. Jug-jug-jug ! " Yes, they are malicious but satisfactory consolations, these whispered triumphs of the artist over the successful climber. And perhaps they rub it in a bit when they get back to that still-undiscovered bird-land where they all go in September. Why does not one of these aviators, thirsting for new records to break, go up in pursuit of some autumn flight of starlings, and find out where it is they really go to ?

WORK OR PLEASURE?

"YESTERDAY," sang Nicarchus, "Dr. Mark touched the marble Zeus: though marble, though Zeus, to-day he is in his coffin." Since his time mankind has never forgotten to laugh at the doctor as a practitioner, yet never ceased to hang on his lips as a theorist. Never is any medical congress held but the speeches are reported by all the papers in the fullest possible detail, and spaced out with the most alarming possible headlines. I confess to the general weakness for such news, and if I see "Are We Growing Stouter?" at the head of a column I cannot resist the attraction.

The other day, it seems, a deputation of American doctors came over and told us that we were all ruining our health and shortening our lives by working too hard. I did not see the full report of this, I only saw a very angry leading article in a Sunday paper, which roundly declared that we do not work nearly hard enough. In fact, it seemed disposed to suspect our American guests of having been sent over deliberately to discourage, in the interests of Transatlantic competition, the already languid efforts of our supine industrialists. It is difficult for one who did not read the original report to believe that the doctors really complained of apoplectic energy on the part of our manual labourers. Did they never get caught by a block in the traffic and have

leisure to observe the reverential care with which our excavators unearth a paving-block ?

But can they really even have said that brain work (such as yours who read this) is the true source of our modern nervous strain ? Of course, we all like to think so. We may be modest about everything else, but we all like to boast that we are overworked. The hand passed over the pallid brow, with " Yes, now you mention it, I think I have been overdoing it rather "—is there a more subtle sop to human vanity ? And no doubt our American guests (for the Americans are the politest people on earth) thought they were paying us a national compliment when they suggested that we were overdoing it. Their politeness lacked discernment ; they should have realised that, while everybody likes to be told *he* overworks, nobody wants to hear the same story about his neighbour. However, perhaps they did not say it.

Surely, of all men, the manual worker puts the least strain on his nervous energies in doing what he does. He may do it in unhealthy surroundings, continually within earshot of whirring machinery, or continually within nose-shot of a tannery, but that is the fault of the conditions, not of the work done. Or he may be engaged in work which exposes him to danger, as a tight-rope walker or a taxi-driver, but there it is the danger, not the work that tells. A regular, steady employment under open-air conditions, involving frequent repetition of the same muscular acts, may leave a man dazed at the end of the day, but it will not leave him a wreck at the end of thirty years.

Think of the village blacksmith shoeing horses, of Hobbs compiling centuries. The thing has become second nature to him.

> Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
> Onward through life he goes ;
> Each morning sees him start with 1
> Each evening adds two o' s ;
> Something accomplished, something done,
> Has earned a night's repose.

It is true that Hobbs's labour is in a sense competitive, and we free-born Britons distrust the idea of competitive labour. But his competition is with a dead hero.

Did you know, by the way, that " Who's Who ? " costs forty-two shillings, whereas " Who was Who ? " the record of those contributors who died between 1897 and 1916, is being sold at five ? So much for fame, and for our ancestors.

What was I saying ? Oh, yes ; work as the cause of nervous strain. Does brainwork, in the broadest sense, kill people, or drive them into rest-cures ? Purely intellectual work may do so ; we will except, for example, the Universities, with their well-known fever of research—only the other day Oxford solved the age-long problem of how you were to change your trousers without taking off your boots. But office-work, keeping books and licking envelopes, and the rest of it—is that really such a tax on the mental powers ? And that, after all, is what most of us are doing—when I say " us," I mean people who buy the evening papers ; why worry about the others ? Say what you will against such an employment ; that it is drudgery, that it is slavery, that it is spoiling English cricket ; but do not say that a

doubtful eight hours of that kind of thing, with an interval for luncheon, is more than the human frame can support.

The real characteristic of the modern age (if you shut your eyes and think over it) is the terrible seriousness with which it takes its pleasures. Suppose a purely rational spectator from some other planet should have visited us during the recent heat-wave ; how he would have chuckled to see us Tellurians thronging the tennis-courts—men and women courting apoplexy by tying themselves up into knots round their rackets, and grovelling under nets to recover truant balls ! The old idea that tennis was a game for the summer arose in the days when it was " lawn " tennis as opposed to " real tennis " ; it was a cool amusement, under the shade of secular elms now ruthlessly extirpated, to pat easy lobs over a sagging net in the direction of the vicar's daughter. Modern tennis, whether played on the lawn or on the loofah, is a game quite as hot as Rugby, and involves much more stretching. But it will never be allowed to take its place among the winter sports, simply because there is a tradition about it. An age which thus employs itself in weather when it ought to be lying on its back is an age which takes its pleasures too seriously. Why cannot the doctors tell us whether there is or is not a health limit to the amount of exercise a man, and still more a woman, can take without actually dropping ? At what point, for example, is it merely idiotic to go on dancing ?

Dancing, I take it, was in its origin a thing you did to please somebody else. If there was

an eclipse of the moon, you got the idea that Mumbo-Jumbo must be put out about something, and you danced to put him in a good temper. Or if you were taken prisoner you danced before the victorious general so as to give him the impression that you were more worth keeping than eating. The dance was adopted by civilised man as an occasional outlet for high spirits, once a year at the Maypole, with a bye now and again. Its increased frequency in later years, when it was a far more leisurely affair, was almost avowedly due to the anxiety of mothers to get their daughters off their hands. It was left for our age to cultivate the dance as an end in itself, as a thing you could not have too often and could not have too much of. But the doctors tell us nothing about how much dancing is good for us—a pertinent question, in days when it is so easy to keep that schoolgirl complexion in a bag.

Nor is it only muscular action that frays the nerves ; what about these motor-bicycles ? Carriage exercise has always been recommended by the faculty, the perambulator for youth, the bath-chair for age, and something a little more stimulating in between. The liver, they say, likes to be jolted, and Dr. Johnson himself once took a roll down a hill. But these unpleasant little machines, useful as servants, have become the most domineering of masters ; the Call of the Road, which ought to stir a man's blood occasionally, has degenerated into a miserable *nostalgie de la poussière.* And where will our nerves be after another generation of it ?

There is moderation in all things. A priest

in the Highlands told me that there were families there who, when night fell (it is liable to fall with a thud about half-past three in those parts), would sit all through the evening staring at the fire, not talking, not occupying their hands, not even smoking. This would be too violent a remedy to suggest for our present disorders. But is there no mean policy to be found? The Sentence of Work was pronounced upon us when we forfeited our first innocence, enough burden for creatures of clay. Must we add to it by sentencing ourselves, in every moment of leisure, to long-term sentences of hectic enjoyment? Has Man so laboriously conquered his planet only to survive as a slave, condemned to walk the treadmill of his own instinct for activity?

WINE AND BUSH

IF and when this article appears, the first Congress of British Advertisers will have just finished its sessions at Harrogate. The choice of *venue* seems a strange one; surely the hustle which we associate with modern advertising will survive with difficulty that atmosphere of bath-chairs—or is the fire of publicity so strong that many waters cannot quench it? However, let us commend them for not holding their meetings in London. Really there is no room for any more people in London, and the Congresses of to-day, like the Parliaments of the Middle Ages, are well advised to go on tour. It is all a step towards the much needed decentralisation of England.

It was only the other day we woke up to the fact that there are advertisers. But it would be unreasonable, surely, to dispute their right to exist. We live in an age of specialisation; it is our modern maxim that if you want a thing well done you should get somebody else to do it for you. What is a schoolmaster, after all? Only a man hired by a boy's parent to act as a sort of specialised parent towards the boy; a man who can still teach him when his questions become too intelligent for his mother, still beat him when he is getting rather too large for his father to collar him conveniently. What is a barrister? Only a man whom we call in because he knows the legal ropes better than we do.

In the same way, life is too short now, and too crowded, for the same man to invent motor-cars and at the same time invent reasons why people should buy them. Nor, if some advertisements tend to overstate the merits of the wares they celebrate, ought we on that account to ostracise the advertiser socially. We do not ostracise the barrister when a jury decides that he has been palliating a theft or a murder. The advertiser, like the barrister, is simply an expert in the art of persuasion.

Nor do we justly dismiss his activities as essentially modern, and therefore essentially vulgar. No doubt it is vulgar in some of its modern developments. We have Gooseflesh and his printing-press to blame for that, as for so much else. But the *idea* of advertising is obviously a logical consequence of competitive trading, and was present, for good or ill, in the street signs of the Middle Ages. Somebody one day hung up a scroll on his shop-front to say that his portcullises were the best, and naturally the rival portcullicians could not be expected to stand that. They must have a still more elaborate scroll, " Buy Master John's portcullises and defy the ram burglar "—that sort of thing. And so the art evolves into fresh stages of subtlety, till at last you arrive at something like this : " Does the wife feel a bit chippy in the afternoons ? Rather headachy, sometimes ? Yes, there's no doubt these afternoon calls do take it out of her "—and so on, till, just as you think you are to hear about the daily dose of elixir, you find it is a good strong portcullis that is being recommended to you after all. Advertising

there must have been, in Merry England as in gloomy Ingeland ; and doubtless the vintner who first drew a picture of five pairs of legs, with the caption " Five Malmsey sacks, please," made a mint of money.

I say advertising begins with competitive trade, some hold that it would cease if competitive trade ceased. Those political thinkers who look forward to a Utopia in which the State will be the sole capitalist would claim, no doubt, that in this glorious future advertising will be done away with. And indeed it seems reasonable to suppose that the communal bacon would not need to recommend itself by any arts of publicity, any more than the postage-stamps of to-day. It may be so ; personally I should feel no surprise if I found a tube carriage to-morrow plastered with the words : " SEND YOUR LETTERS BY POST," so strangely has the itch for *réclame* affected even our public services.

But, whatever is due to happen in Utopia (may I not be there to see to it !), I believe it is false economics to imagine that modern advertisement is simply competitive in its inspiration. The thing is more subtle than that. You pass by a hoarding, which draws your attention simultaneously to the rival merits of Smith's braces and Jones's braces. Smith has given you an elaborate diagram of his braces, with little arrows pointing in various directions to show how they take the strain, and a large hand indicating the special patent clip which only Smith knows how to manufacture. Jones has done the thing on broader lines ; he gives you a picture of a garden-party

at which all wearers of Jones's braces are registering comfort, self-possession, the cultivated smile that marks the man of the world. Wear Jones's braces (that is the moral) and feel at your ease.

Looking upon this picture and on this, the uninstructed layman imagines that Smith and Jones alike endured sleepless nights in thinking out such ruses for capturing each other's brace market. He is wrong, of course, in that ; both the pictures are turned out by the same firm of advertisers, and Harrogate could tell you which. But, worse than that, a city friend who is really in the know assures you that about five years since the rival firms of Smith and Jones amalgamated, so that there is really no competition in the matter at all. And at that the uninstructed begins to despair of our modern sanity altogether. Bad enough that money should be spent in mere competition, that Smith and Jones should both be disfiguring the suburbs with rival announcements of shoulder-joy, although if both stopped advertising both would be exactly where they are. But that Smith and Jones should actually be the same person, yet both clamouring for our custom—what is the meaning of it ?

The meaning of it is that modern advertising is no longer competitive. The advertiser, as we saw, is an expert in the art of persuasion ; and his mission is no longer (as formerly) to convince you that it is Smith's braces for you rather than Jones's. He wants to convince you that you need braces. He can penetrate beneath your respectable coat, see all the knots

and the safety-pins and the pieces of string and bootlace that are, for the moment, holding together the braces you bought six years ago. Every morning you say to yourself, " I really must get a new pair of braces " ; every day you pass the haberdasher's, and indolence, meanness, or the consciousness of unpaid bills makes you turn away. Then comes the ordeal of the hoarding, where Jones and Smith unite to blazon abroad the secrets of your wardrobe in six-inch letters. Sooner or later, the advertiser knows, your nerve will break down under this repeated suggestion, until you stand meekly at the counter, ordering Smith's braces or Jones's braces—it matters not which.

That, then, is modern advertising ; it exists to create or to stimulate the consciousness of a real or imaginary need. That is why " Truth in Advertising " is a perfectly serious slogan ; the advertiser does not want to claim for his wares merits which they do not possess : he wants to remind you of a need you have forgotten, or convince you of a need you are attempting to disguise from yourself.

That is why the advertisers are continually asking why religion does not go in for more publicity. For if there is a need of which the ordinary man has to be reminded, if there is a need which the ordinary man is for ever attempting to disguise from himself, it is the need for a religious orientation of his life. And (say the advertisers) if you religious people have got hold of a good thing, why don't you try to boom it ?

It is useless to retort that advertisement is foreign to the whole spirit of idealism. Who

was ever such an advertiser as your knight-errant, who went round proclaiming his lady's right to be regarded as the fairest lady in the world? Or his modern analogue, the young lover who fishes portraits of his fiancée out of his breast pocket? No; the reason why most religions do not advertise more, and more efficaciously, is that they are wholly uncertain about the content of their own message. Their theology is so hopelessly tied up that they do not know what goods it is they are trying to deliver.

Meanwhile the curse of advertising (for there is a curse of advertising) is that it helps the small shopkeeper and the small manufacturer to disappear. Handicapped already by want of capital, he is still further handicapped by want of funds to advertise with. So he goes under. But, then, advertisement is only one of the causes which make for this regrettable disappearance. Sooner or later we must all knuckle under before the field-marshals of industry.

TENNESSEE AFTERTHOUGHTS

LOVERS of Mark Twain—I wonder, are we already beginning to seem old-fashioned?—will remember one of his "Sketches," which is entitled "Journalism in Tennessee"; how the author attempted to write up the "Spirit of the Tennessee Press" in terms of ordinary journalistic courtesy, and had his contribution overhauled by the editor till it became a welter of violent personal abuse; how the editor went out to luncheon, leaving directions as to how callers were to be dealt with—Jones was to be horsewhipped, and so on; how the callers did arrive, and did not wait to be dealt with—"Jones took the horsewhipping job out of my hands"; the return of the editor, the series of conflicts which ensued, and Mark Twain's final departure to "take apartments at the hospital."

All this prepared us to expect from Tennessee a rather direct attitude towards the problems of life; it ought not to have surprised us that a purely legal issue as to whether the State had a right to forbid the teaching of certain subjects in the State schools should be turned into a straight fight between violent defenders and violent assailants of Scriptural inspiration. Slogans of the palæo-Darwinian epoch thundered daily across that valley of decision—was it not right that it should be so? Was not this worthy of the country where a stranger could enter a newspaper office with

the words : " Have I the honour of addressing the poltroon who edits this mangy sheet ? "

What is more surprising is that the public as a whole should have calmly accepted Tennessee's definition of the issue. The civilised world hastened to reassert its belief in the doctrines of evolution (without troubling to mention what those doctrines were), and showed extreme annoyance that there should be a doubt in any Tennessean breast as to the literal inspiration vouchsafed to Charles Darwin. Why this sudden readiness to turn the affair into a second Dreyfus case ? What does it matter to us what principles regulate the school curricula of a distant Continent ? My own rather languid belief in the transformist hypothesis was not shaken by the dissent, and would not have been fortified by the concurrence, of somebody in Tennessee.

The real issue, which the Tennessean advocates, whether on the side of apes or angels, seem to have overlooked, was a perfectly simple one : Whose business is it to regulate the programme of education in State-endowed schools ? Agitated controversialists fell to talking as if the State of Tennessee were guilty of inflicting a public wrong. But if there was wrong done in the matter, it means either that Evolution has a positive right to be taught, or that all children have a positive right to be taught it, or that all schoolmasters have a positive right to teach it. Examine each of those propositions in turn—which of them can be made good ?

As a matter of fact the Darwinian theory is still not proved : it is possible to name first-

rate scientists who do not accept it. The rival parts played by adaptation and by natural selection may, I conceive, be a fruitful subject of controversy for many years to come. But even if the evidence for it were overwhelming, it is still not the kind of truth which must necessarily be imparted to every human being if he is to become a good citizen, if he is to get the best out of life, and so on. It is a doctrine of the laboratories. It is arguable, no doubt, that it would be tyrannous to suppress all reference to the existence of the theory, all advocacy of its merits, in books, newspaper articles, and even in private conversation. The progress of scientific knowledge might be positively hampered in the process. But nobody in Tennessee has suggested State action of such a kind. Nobody has threatened liberty of discussion or a censorship of the Press. If the truth will out, it can surely out in other ways ; it need not advertise itself by displaying portraits of the ichthyosaurus (who lived many ages before us) in every class-room.

And as for the right of the children, obviously it is nonsense to say that a child has a right to be taught anything. A child which has a right to be taught if it wants to has a right not to be taught if it wants to. Give a class of children its choice between hearing about the pithecanthropus and going out nutting, and there will be no doubt as to the vote. A few earnest inquiries will probably stand out for education ; but in this syndicalist age it is only right that the protest of these blacklegs should be disregarded, and that they should be picketed if they do not down notebooks. Gray, indeed,

seems to suggest that instruction is a duty owed to the child :

> Alas, regardless of their doom,
> The little victims play ;
> No sense have they of ills to come,
> Nor care beyond to-day.

but even so his conclusion is " Ah, tell them they are men," not " Ah, tell them they are monkeys." Of course, children would like to hear about pithecanthropus, because they would be able to throw that up at their Sunday-school teacher the next time Adam and Eve came along. There is no more characteristic trait of the child mind than its love of playing off one master against the other. I am all with the State of Tennessee in spoiling the little brutes' chances here.

Parents have a clear right to educate their children. The State has a less clear right to see that children do not grow up in a state of harmful ignorance. But in some mysterious way a theory has grown up in our days that a teacher has a right to teach whatever he likes. What claim could possibly be more monstrous ? In a school designed for the sons of the rich, nobody questions the right of the parent to say that his child shall be taught this, shall not be taught that. Why, I remember a boy who was not allowed to go to the sick-room because his family believed in Christian Science. " I don't mind his cutting his foot on a field-day," said one of my colleagues, " but I do object to having to carry him home." In the last resort the boy can be taken or sent away and get his schooling elsewhere. Parents of more limited means have no choice of schools open

to them, and inevitably the State, as representing the supposed will of the majority, has to decide on the school curriculum in their name. If there is a minority of parents that wants its children brought up to love pithecanthropus, they must set up pithecanthropic schools for themselves, or else demand "facilities." The State must teach what the State believes.

And the teacher—Heaven help us all, what is he but an employé of the State, paid to do what he is told? If a Catholic teacher in a public elementary school believes (what there is plenty of reason to believe) that the Gunpowder Plot was simply a scare invented by Cecil, he has no right to teach that, in defiance of the textbook, if the school authorities direct otherwise. He can resign his position and feel a martyr if he will, but where would be the sense in bringing an action for unjust dismissal?

Grant, if you will, that the Darwinian theory is plausible—*se non e vero, e ben trovato*, as Galileo said when they told him to recant his view about the earth going round the sun. But it is for the responsible authorities, not for a paid official, to decide whether that theory shall be taught. The State, as the responsible authority, may decide that the theory, true or false, is more likely to muddle children's brains (children being what they are) than to promote learning. It may apprehend that the pupil who is told not to get monkeying in class will reply, "But I am a monkey; teacher says so!" It may be convenient to burke the question of evolution, just as it is convenient to burke the question of heredity in an orphanage. Even on such slight grounds, the State

is surely justified in saying to its employé, "Leave the subject alone, or take a character and find a job elsewhere."

Actually, the motive in this case goes much deeper. The Tennessee legislature holds a belief, which we may or may not share, that transformism is obviously a false theory, because it is irreconcilable with the ascertained truths of Scripture. It is quite legitimate for those who disagree to criticise its beliefs. But it is merely idiotic to criticise its actions for being consistent with them.

MONOMARKS

A KIND correspondent has sent me some "literature" about the Monomark system, which is shortly to descend upon us in a blaze of publicity—at present only the distant rumblings of its artillery have been heard in the Press. I suppose this article is really publicity; and if I knew the way things are done, I should probably be drawing a handsome commission. Like a mug, I am writing it for nothing; but perhaps that gives me a freer hand.

The idea underlying the Monomark philosophy is, I take it, that names have had their day; they were useful in their time, but they are now superannuated. *We are living under a system in which the anomaly exists, in Great Britain alone, of there being* 530,000 *Smiths,* 204,000 *J. Smiths,* 41,000 *John Smiths,* 30,000 *J. W. Smiths, and* 4,800 *John William Smiths, with an address as their only identification.* That is the sort of thing that gives one to think.

Poor John William Smith! I do not know him, but he has all my sympathy; it must be so confusing there being so many of him. I have never, as a matter of fact, met or read of any exact homonym of my own—even if you only take the two names—but you never know when it might happen. My heart goes out to the Smiths; no wonder they hyphenise. Under the Monomark system—why do we always talk, nowadays, of living *under* a

system? It betrays the weakness of the modern mind, which makes a slavery out of its own conventions—under the Monomark system, every man will be able to express his individuality for five shillings a year, or a life subscription of £2 12s. 6d.

On the outside of the pamphlet there is a picture of an envelope addressed " BM/RT3T, London, W.C. 1." " B.M. " stands for " British Monomark," yes ; and " London, W.C. 1 " is only to help the postal authorities, in the improbable event of anyone wishing to do so. " RT3T " is the re-christening of a lonely unit of humanity ; perhaps (who knows ?) a J. W. Smith, hitherto merged amid a queue of J. W. Smiths. For five shillings a year he has become an individual at last. He is the only RT3T in Great Britain. He is the only BM/RT3T in the world. Forgotten the thousand tricks and taints of the ancient Smith lineage. Forgotten the John which stamps him but a dull replica of his father, the William which betrays the expectations he has from his Uncle William. He is the master of his fate, the captain of his soul. RT3T belongs to him absolutely ; within that lonely island of existence he is monomark of all he surveys.

And the secret is his secret. Like the person in Browning, he boasts two name-plates, one to face the world with, one to tell a woman when he loves her. All public activities can be carried on under an alias which is at the same time a sufficient business address. Take my own position. A fortnight back I wrote in these columns, " *Se non e vero, e ben trovato*, as Galileo said when they told him to recant

his view about the sun going round the earth." This was meant to be a joke. But the offices of the *Evening Standard* have been plagued ever since with letters from kind people pointing out to me that it was really somebody else who made the remark. Now, if I wrote in these columns as BM/KNOX (it seems to me I am a natural Monomark), all these kind people could simply address their envelopes like that, adding " London, W.C. 1 " if they were on good terms with the post office—and so the *Evening Standard* would be saved all the trouble. At the same time I should be able to hide my blushes, and you would never connect the mysterious writer BM/KNOX, who made that shocking howler about Galileo, with the handsome young fellow you met the other day at tea.

Of course there are lots of other advantages about the system—brevity, for example. It is far easier to mark your hat " BM/JS9H " than to inscribe it " Augustus Hemmerdine, Esq., the Mesembrianthemums, Serajevo Road, Victoria Park, Huddersfield." But a hat marked BM/JS9H (or at least news of its whereabouts) will reach Huddersfield infallibly with only the short delay indicated by a London W.C. postmark. *His trunks, bags, etc., would be identified by his monomark instead of his initials. The result would be that the custodian or finder of forgotten or mislaid luggage in any part of the world would write to the Monomark appearing on the luggage, adding London, W.C. 1, stating, " You have left your bag here."* (Oh, I see, that kind of bags.) The real brainwave of the whole scheme is that you can

register 25,000,000 different people, giving each a separate mark of identification, yet none of these more than five letters long.

But, as I say, what I like about the idea is that it gives the owner a sense of personality. There is a splendid incommunicableness about that RT3T. You feel, as day after day you catch the same bus to miss the same suburban train, sit at the same desk over the same intolerably familiar files, that Modern Industrialism has turned you into a mere cog in the great machine, a mere cell in the vast structure of Society? Never mind, you are RT3T still; nobody can take that away from you as long as you pay your subscription. At Monomark House, London, W.C. 1, there is a sort of Recording Angel to whom you are a real, living personality, splendidly isolated from the rest of your toiling race. Rightly viewed, your monomark is a patent of nobility.

That there are snags about the proposition, as about all propositions, it would be foolish to deny. Registration is mechanical; and where a mechanical system goes wrong, it goes badly wrong. If I miss a key on my typewriter, I put HELL instead of DELL, which is far sillier than any mistake I should make in writing. Just so the Monomark system will have its drawbacks; a letter which just goes wrong, instead of fetching up at the house across the way (where you are probably known) may fetch up at the address of a total stranger hundreds of miles distant.

There always will be misaddressed letters. There are people who cannot remember things; people who can remember things but always

remember them wrong—" Bullfinch ! To be sure, I was certain it was some name like Prendergast " : you know the type. Both from bad memories and from bad calligraphy come slight errors, which at present do no great harm. For instance, if I write to tell Mr. Smith, at 21, Mafeking Avenue, that his wife is dead, but forgetfully write 41 instead of 21, or write 21 so badly that the post office people read it as 41, Mr. Murgatroyd at 41 is not interested in the letter even if he reads it. But fancy wiring " Come at once. Your wife is dangerously ill," to Monomark CZ7W and finding that it has gone to GZ7W by mistake ! What possible explanation could be adequate ? I shall probably find, if I register KNOX, that some enterprising maker of Plus Fours has registered KNIX. How tired I shall be of complaints about the non-arrival of holiday suits ! How tired he will be of people writing to know what possible justification he can give of the doctrine of indulgences ! However, it is unfair to confound the abuses of a system with its uses.

What is more questionable is whether the Monomark will not open the way to an increase of pointless publicity. How many letters there are, not worth writing, which we are only restrained from writing because we are not sure of the address ! The lunatics, the begging-letter writers, the advertising agents—how much easier it will be for them to circularise us when our public description is itself (with or without the addition of London, W.C. 1) a sufficient address. I knew a man who, whenever he came across any circular, announcement,

or other document of a public kind that took his fancy, always put it in an envelope and forwarded it to the proprietor of the Station Hotel at York. Why, I do not know, unless because this was the one man in England whose address he felt sure of. Postal facilities are all very well, but it is a question, since the halfpenny post came to ruin our peace of mind (Rowland Hill, I am told, was a great enemy of the halfpenny post), whether we do not want more postal difficulties. If one were very rich, it would be amusing to take out a new Monomark every week. . . .

Meanwhile, let us make it clear that we do not want the Monomark to supersede all other systems of nomenclature. We do not want to open *The Times* newspaper and see at the head of the first column "LH9M.—To the wife (*née* MH8W) of FX4B, a son (LH9M)." *Nos numerus sumus*, says Horace, but we do not want to take our humiliation too literally. And, above all, let us die at the barricades rather than let anybody *make* us register monomarks. For compulsory registration is a trick of tyranny, ever since the days when King David numbered the people of Israel and a fortunate pestilence put his calculations 70,000 out.

PROVERBS OF THE PAST

WE were all brought up on proverbs by our aunts and nurses. They seemed to have been invented by long generations of aunts and nurses, so pat did they come, so nimbly did they head us off when we wanted to do anything a child ever does want to do. Proverbs were, to our elders, what powder and shot have been to the British Empire in its pacification of barbarous tribes ; it was an armoury we could not tap ; the wisdom of the ancients was at their fingers' ends. We did not know enough to realise that two can play at the game, and that there is a counter-proverb to be found even for the most platitudinous of them. When we were assured that early to bed, early to rise made a man healthy, wealthy and wise, we got up ; we did not know of King Solomon's dictum (I quote it from memory, but it is authentic) that " He who blesses his neighbour, rising up early in the morning and blessing him, the same shall be a curse unto him."

What we never realised (at least, I never realised it) was the vast store from which these proverbs were drawn. Anybody who has children to keep in order had better get hold of Ray's English Proverbs, a third edition of which was published as lately as 1737, and find there a rich treasure-house of wise sayings, three parts of which, to all appearance, have become quite obsolete.

I will not linger over the Proverbial Observations Concerning Husbandry, because no doubt they still survive, in weird dialectic forms, and you can hear them if you are at pains to leave the door of the bar parlour open. Nor yet over the Proverbial Observations Referring to Love, etc., because their want of gallantry would offend the sex by its repetition ("He that loses his wife and a farthing hath a great loss of his farthing" is typical of the rest). An Alphabet of Joculatory, Nugatory, and Rustic Proverbs is attractive, but strangely mystifying. "He capers like a fly in a tar-box"; what imaginations these proverb-makers have! "The way to be gone is not to stay here"; this, I take it, must have been a polite hint in rustic circles. I should know what to do if I were accosted like that; but what exact sense would one apply to the phrase "Great doings at Gregory's, heat the oven twice for a custard"? Or "Toasted cheese hath no master"? Or "This is the world and the other is in the country"? Most of us have laughed at jokes we could not see, but it must have been heavy work spending an evening with Mr. Ray's tenants when they were joculatory.

But all this, as the author observes, is nugatory; the sayings that are of practical, child-silencing value begin only with "Proverbs that are Intire Sentences." These occupy a good hundred pages, and all appear to have some moral, or at least financial bearing. "Children and fools speak truth"—that is a useful one if your juniors catch you out in a misstatement. "He that would eat a good dinner, let him eat a good breakfast," is clearly

one for the child ; if you get the book, you must keep it high up on your shelves, more especially as it gives " Care killed the cat," instead of the form, " Don't care killed the cat," with which I used to be terrorised. And here we are with an answer to the early-rising sophistry : " Early up and never the nearer "—a profound fellow this ! But, as I said, the book must be kept from children.

Here, by the way, is the original of the saying than an Englishman never knows when he is beaten, " A right Englishman knows not when a thing is well "—an allusion, I take it, to our national habit of grousing. " Fools build houses, and wise men buy them " bears the stamp of its date ; it could hardly have been coined in our day. Unless, indeed, it was writ sarcastic, for our friend has his tongue in his cheek sometimes : " Some good things I do not love, a good long mile, good small beer, and a good old woman."

There is no end to the variety of it (the discerning reader has already detected that I proceed alphabetically, so I will cast away disguise). How is it that Sam Weller failed to say, " As the man said to him on the tree-top, Make no more haste when you come down than when you went up " ? And what could be more admirably pithy than " Nothing must be done hastily but killing of fleas " ?

Towards my own cloth the proverb-maker is somewhat lacking in respect, if I appreciate rightly the sense of " No penny, no Paternoster " ; there is a fuller version that seems to put it from the clerical point of view : " *They shall have no more of our prayers than we of*

their pies, quoth the Vicar of Layton "—the honest man! Pies, I observe, were held in special estimation. "Better some of a pudding," we are told, "than none of a pie." Here is a good exercise in grammar, said to come from Yorkshire: "If well and them cannot, then ill and them can."

The Proverbial Phrases and Forms of Speech that are not Intire Sentences are full of personal references, long lost in the bypaths of history, that arrest the imagination. "*The case is altered*, quoth Plowden," does seem to be connected with the Catholic family of Plowden, and to date from penal times, but most of them have no explanation. "*Bate me an ace*, quoth Bolton," or "*Nay, stay*, quoth Stringer, when his neck was in the halter." So "My Lord Baldwin's dead" (*absit omen*) seems to have been the earlier form of "Queen Anne." "To get by a thing as Dickson did by his distress," "*I was by*, quoth Pedley, *when my eye was put out*," "*I'll make one*, quoth Kirkham when he danced in his clogs," "*Ware skins*, quoth Grubber, when he flung the louse into the fire," "*I'll neither mend nor make*, said Bill Heaps, when he spilled the buttermilk," and, even more concise, "*But when?* quoth Kettle to his mare." How pleasant to think of these alehouse epigrammatists, Dicksons and Grubbers and Kirkhams, adding each his immortal phrase to the world's store of wisdom, and so content to rest with his fathers! Peace be to their ashes, and may their names live with Phocylides.

Wellerisms abound in these Proverbial Phrases that are not Intire Sentences. "*That*

char is char'd, as the good wife said when she had hanged her husband." " *There's a thing in't*, quoth the fellow when he drank the dish-clout," and " *Here's a great cry and but a little wool*, as the fellow said when he sheared his dogs,"—that last is an addition that doubles the value of a proverb still current. There is a democratic charm about the phrase " All fellows at football," which might well be adopted as a motto by the Rugby Union ; the war-cry came, I take it, from merry England, and it is amusing to see what our eighteenth-century squirearch makes of it in his annotation, " If Gentlemen and persons ingeniously educated will mingle themselves with rusticks in their rude sports, they must look for usage like to or rather coarser than others." And if Tate wants a motto, here is one for him : " An honest man and a good bowler."

There follows a short collection of Proverbial Similes, of the same breed with " as dead as a door-nail," " as pleased as Punch," and the rest. Those which are still current must have survived by a sort of natural selection from a far larger number, many of them strangely lacking in apparent point. If we feel tempted to ask why a fiddle should be particularly fit, or a pikestaff notoriously plain, let us remember that " as fine as fivepence," " as dizzy as a goose," " as nimble as a cow in a cage," " as proud as an apothecary," and " as sick as a cushion " were once recognised formulas of comparison.

Here again we find mysterious allusions to the once-named worthies of the past : " as coy as Croker's mare," " as cunning as Craddock,"

" as lazy as Ludlam's dog, that leaned his head against a wall to bark," " as welcome as Hopkin, that came to jail overnight and was hanged next morning," " like Goodyer's pig, never well but when he is doing mischief," " like the parson of Saddleworth, who could read in no book but his own," and so on. I confess that " as necessary as a sow among young children " is a phrase that leaves me guessing.

Even more mysterious, though fully annotated with very far-fetched explanations, are the local proverbs derived from Fuller's Worthies. To a near neighbour like myself, " Ware and Wadesmill are worth all Hertfordshire " is a sufficient sample ; I have never met a resident that could hazard an opinion as to its meaning.

I find I have left myself no space to discuss the proverbs communicated by Mr. Andrew Paschall, of Chedsey in Somersetshire, which came not to hand till the copy of the second edition was delivered to the bookseller ; except perhaps to quote the words, " *There or thereabouts,* as Parson Smith says." So many of these epigrammatic phrases have become mere catchwords nowadays, we tend to forget that they must have had an origin. " There or thereabouts "—it was a Smith who first thought that out, and, I am pleased to see, a man of my own cloth.

There is a lot more in the book besides. The Hebrew proverbs, for example. " To expect, to expect is worth four hundred drachms " ; I wonder what that means ?

BLACK MONDAY

AT some unpleasant imminent date—I am not quite clear which—I shall have to go back to school. Excuse me while I tie a knot in my handkerchief.

Why is it that on Black Monday the world reserves all its sympathy for the schoolboy? Has it no tears for the schoolmaster, condemned to a fresh treadmill round of the same ignorances, idiocies, indolences from a new set of immature disciples? Condemned to suffer, with the frayed nerves of manhood, the interminable proximity of that strident, graceless, fidgeting animal, the human boy? True, he returns not as convict, but as gaoler. But what of that? As Colonel Gordon says in "Prince Otto," what is a gaoler but a fellow-prisoner? The warder returning to Princetown from his holidays (I suppose warders do have holidays) views it, I fancy, with mere loathing, whereas the convict, revisiting it after a season, welcomes it probably with something of a sentimental attachment. *Omnes eodem cogimur;* and, mark you, the schoolmaster is bound to assume a forced air of geniality to greet the term with, whereas the schoolboy can honestly avow that he is fed up to the teeth. Which reminds me that before I go back to school I must visit the dentist. Another knot at the opposite corner. Black Monday, indeed!

No such poignant analysis has been made of that last-day-of-the-holidays feeling as is to be

found in the first chapter of Mr. Anstey's "Vice Versa." Critics whose schooldays lie far behind them often speak of that admirable work as if it were a tremendous essay in realism, "so exactly true to life." Personally, I do not believe that Dr. Grimstone's academy ever had an original in real life—though it is dangerous to make such guesses; the genuine original of Mr. Wackford Squeers' advertisement is still accessible, only the name of Dotheboys being altered. But I do not believe that Dr. Grimstone would have consented to travel with his charges; I do not believe in the dictated letter home (try copying it out, and see how many sheets you cover); above all, I do not believe in Dulcie. The element of satire in the book is far too strong to leave any room for realism.

But what Mr. Anstey does get to perfection (as always) is the psychological reaction on the situation; the feelings of hot embarrassment which only school life can breed. He does, as usual, succeed in giving you the horribly uncomfortable sensation that it is you, not Mr. Bultitude, for whom the cab is waiting at the door.

And, whatever the lack of strict realism, the book does achieve its end. It is called "A Lesson to Fathers," and it rubs in the lesson relentlessly. It exposes, pitilessly, that false retrospect which makes parents say that their schooldays were the happiest days of their life. It pricks the bubble of Bultitudinosity there is in all of us. The stale truth is that none of us can really read himself back into the boy's frame of mind. That is why all school stories fail to convince, except those that are written

from the schoolmaster's end. For realism you must go to "The Lanchester Tradition" or "Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill." Even in "Stalky and Co." how much better the masters are drawn than the boys! The sentiment of repugnance with which you used to go back to school is an experience unrecapturable, only to be remembered by a discomfortable thrill.

To me, going back to school always connects itself with Banbury cakes, poor solace for such a journey, consumed *en route*. Ovals of rich pastry, distended with sheer mincemeat—the countenance is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of indigestion at the very thought of them. You could only buy them three at a time, in cardboard boxes. (They make cardboard boxes at Banbury; and the cardboard box makers of Banbury are the only industrialists among whom I ever helped to found a trade union.) So long as there were two of us going back to school together, the allowance was a reasonable one, though the Banbury cake is hardly patient of bisection. Afterwards it became an undeniable struggle. But one's fellow-passengers were sympathetic to the unmistakably woebegone features of the returning schoolboy. I wonder what became of the undergraduate ploughed, I fear, in some public examination, who fell into chat with me on such an occasion, and recommended me to *work like the devil?* It speaks well for the admirable discipline of my private school that I thought his advice superfluous at the time: I had never discovered any way of doing otherwise.

Why did one mind it so? As for going back

to Eton, I will say (at the risk of Bultitudinosity) that I never did mind it after the age of fifteen. But a private school was, somehow, a very different affair. Nature came to us, as to the nonagenarian in Lucretius, and told us that we had played, eaten, and drunk enough, why could we not depart with complaisance, like guests already gorged? (She had us there.) But did we check our complaints? The protest fell on deaf ears. There was something inconsolably dreary in that atmosphere of packed boxes, holiday tasks with the pages half cut, suspicious politeness from female relatives, forced gaiety on the part of male ditto, Sunday clothes, tips, Bradshaws, health certificates—you could not distinguish the elements in that manifold laceration of the mind. Nothing in Ovid ever stirred one's youthful imagination except the poignant realism of his "Last Night in Rome." "I had had neither heart nor leisure for preparation; my senses were dulled with a long lethargy of delay." For once the old bounder had hit it!

But what was the *gravamen*, what was the driving force of it all? Useless to ask the schoolboy for information; bidden to write an essay on such subjects, he retorts with that mixture of cheap cynicism and intolerably edifying platitude which is a schoolboy's idea of an essay. They don't like being made to work; those few of us who secretly did not mind being made to work found compensation in the disgust we felt at being made to play games: but then, does the amount of work they do really make all that difference? They

don't like living by routine, running with flying bootlaces to the pitiless clanging of bells ; but, after all, routine becomes before long its own anodyne. They don't like food which offends by absence of choice and absence of variety, but even here use will do wonders ; Nature, as ever, tempers the shorn lamb to the wind. They don't like being under discipline, but there is some discipline at home even nowadays ; and there are always elder brothers. Plenty of grievances, but they don't come to much if you add them all up ; and the brute fact stands out against them, that while boys are at school they are not (save for a very small minority) unhappy. On the contrary, any wise old schoolmaster will tell you that the little beasts are full of beans.

Why should the transition from the qualified raptures of home to the qualified horrors of school involve such a sense of uprooting ? Upon my word, one would be inclined to put it down to mere dislike of change, mere prejudice, such as their elders often feel, against *ition* in the abstract, if this theory were not belied by the phenomena which mark the end of term. This change is attended by an equally overdone fanfare of jubilation. What can be the matter with them ?

Unless, indeed, that dull heaviness of the last afternoon at home is an unconscious presage, marking man's reaction against the long perspective of drudgery that is his life. Unless, unconsciously, the schoolboy sees in his return to Algebra and the Gender Rhymes a type and an earnest of Work in general, long hours of enforced servitude on an office stool. Unless

his protest is not really against the routine of Grimstone's—tolerable, as routine goes—but against all routine whatever, against the daily tram and the nightly tube that are to be his portion on this side of the grave. Unless Wordsworth was right, and the shades of the prison house are what matters ; the immortal spirit chafing at its cramped lot, and visiting on the institution of school, an institution not in itself altogether odious, all the sense of grievance which the conditions of fallen mortality inspire in it. If so, I suppose the parade of joy at the end of term is equally the foretaste of that release from life which is our real home-coming ? But stay, I grow Bultitudinous.

Meanwhile, when is it exactly that I go back to school ? Will it, and the dentist, accept this intimation that I intend to visit them on the 21st, unless I hear to the contrary ?

MY IRRELIGION

WHEN the Millennium arrives, as there is every reason to think it will before long, there will, no doubt, be an *Index Jocorum*, which will be a blessing to us writing fellows, and still more to the public. All jokes, but especially anecdotes, will have to be entered at Stationers' Hall, and it will be illegal to release one without giving its age : " fresh," " new-laid," " pre-war," and so on.

As it is, you never know which stories *are* chestnuts. This one, for example, that I am leading up to, about the man at Cowes (you're sure you don't ?) who met an acquaintance of humble origin and plebeian speech, wearing the blazer, or pea-jacket, or whatever it is, of the Royal Yacht Club. He protested in horror, explaining that that sort of thing wasn't done ; and next day met the same acquaintance in the same blazer, but with the letters M.O.B.Y.C. embroidered over the pocket. The wearer, when challenged for an explanation, said the letters stood for " My Own "—oh, you do know it ? Then why couldn't you have said so at first ?

I have been irresistibly reminded of this story by the recent action of a morning paper in starting a series of articles by well-known novelists under the heading " My Religion." The phrase, of course, is a perfectly legitimate one ; and when Mr. Compton Mackenzie

replies to the editor's question by offering some of the considerations which led him to become a Catholic, it explains itself naturally enough. Mr. Mackenzie writes about "my religion" just as a Dane (say) might write for the English public about "my country"; there is no mistaking his attitude; it has nothing proprietary in it, nothing egotistic. But I hope I am not alone in feeling that most of the other contributions suggest a quite different interpretation of the word "my." The others write of religions which are their own invention, for which they themselves are responsible—their religion and nobody else's. Which seems so odd.

For it is, ,surely one of the accidental glories of any religion, true or false, that it should be a bond which unites men in the observance of it. Even a tribal cult which does not pretend that its god is the god of any neighbouring tribe—would regard it, indeed, as plagiarism if neighbours were to adopt its own tenets—nevertheless identifies itself eagerly with the whole life of that one tribe. Birth and coming of age are alike marked by ceremonies which bestow a religious and a political status, make a man a communicant (so to speak) and consequently a citizen. The more recent and reflective religious organisations of the world go further, and insist that if things were as they should be, not one tribe only but the whole of mankind would be united in holding this or that creed, however tenuous, fulfilling these or those religious duties, however unexacting. In short, what everybody naturally demands of a religion is that it should be, not his

religion, but the religion of all good men; ideally, the religion of all men whatsoever. It is hardly reassuring for the common mortal who looks for religious leadership to be confronted with a pile of helpful theories bearing the label " A poor thing but mine own."

" My " religion is a daunting phrase, because it suggests idiosyncrasy; it is daunting also because it carries with it a flavour of ownership. It suggests that you have invented the religion for yourself. The very word religion means restraint, implies a power which is greater than you and outside your control, a power which imposes itself on you. The word loses its whole force if your " religion " is simply a mirror of yourself, reflecting your own fads and foibles, your own kinks and prejudices. I do not mean that a religion must necessarily be a revealed religion; " natural religion " is a perfectly sensible thing, and was indeed in most parts of the world the only religion Man had before the Christian era. But natural religion depends largely upon the horse sense of the human mind; we don't need literary men to dictate it to us. " My " religion means, commonly, the religion that suits itself to my particular temperament, it is the supernatural seen from my particular angle of vision, however myopic, however distorted. Inevitable that a man's religious sentiments, if they depend on no revelation, should become thus individualised. But why feed it to us in the daily Press? Do they expect us to lie down and say, " There is one God, and Gigadibs is His prophet? "

Of all men Gigadibs is the last man who should be turned loose on this sort of thing,

For your writer of fiction is accustomed to ape the airs of creative Intelligence. He is a creator, although his puppets live only in a shadow world. In that shadow world he is sole demiurge ; he can predestine his hero to live happily ever afterwards, his villain to throw himself over a precipice, or (what is more common nowadays) the other way round. He can dictate to a stenographer the colour of his heroine's hair (what is left of it), her early struggles and inhibitions, her improbable partiality for sheikhs and cavemen ; he can make his characters come in for a fortune or go bankrupt at a moment's notice : he puts every word into their mouths, every thought into their heads.

When he has finished his dictation he can sit down and (on the wrapper) pronounce his work very good. Nothing restrains him except the canons of Art, and those not much. What wonder if such a man thinks of the supernatural world as a continuation of his last best-seller, a world whose conditions his own fancy can impose, a world which will be the mirror of his own mind ? Not even of his mind, necessarily ; it may be only of his mood. When Mr. Wells wrote " God the Invisible King," it was doubtful whether it reflected his mind ; it was quite certain that it reflected his mood. He wanted a God to beat the Germans with.

The result is not difficult to foresee. Gigadibs offers us a picture of the supernatural world as it would be if he had had the creating and the ordering of it. He does his imaginative job conscientiously, no doubt, creditably per-

haps ; but what sort of guarantee have we that the supernatural world as it really is corresponds to what Gigadibs thinks it ought to be ? There is no room here for original argument ; one can only restate the thesis of that often quoted, seldom read, never refuted work, Butler's "Analogy." If Gigadibs had created our visible world of sense and of certainty, would he have produced the world we see around us ? Not he ; none will tell you so more loudly than he.

> Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodd ;
> Have mercy on my soul, Lord God ;
> As I would do, gin I were God,
> And Thou wert Martin Elginbrodd.

For Gigadibs that is but a small stretch of the imagination. If he had been the Omnipotent, he tells us, there should have been no pain in the world except perhaps such pain as was personally deserved, and calculated to reform the character which had deserved it ; human life would have flickered out painlessly at the age of ninety ; there would have been no madmen, no hereditary criminals, and so on. Now, if Gigadibs's idea of the natural order as it ought to be is so different from the natural order as it is, what sense is there in assuming that Gigadibs's idea of the supernatural order as it ought to be corresponds with the supernatural order as it is ? The probability is that Gigadibs is as badly out in the one case as in the other. Meanwhile the plain man does not want Gigadibs's religion ; he wants Almighty God's religion.

I have called this article "My Irreligion," because I could quite easily sit down and draw

up paper religions for myself; only I should not call them religions but irreligions, because they would not bind me, whereas the function of religion, by mere force of words, is to bind. Just so I could easily re-write Bradshaw, if I chose, in a way which would be far more satisfactory to myself; you should see what I would do with the —— branch of the London and Nowhere Else Railway! But such pleasing fancies have this disadvantage, that the trains will not run according to my revised edition; they will run according to Bradshaw-as-it-is. Any intelligent man could make up half a dozen quite interesting creeds before breakfast. It is just as easy to *imagine* a creed without hell as it is to imagine a world without pain. But what would you? I am only Martin Elginbrodd.

If Mr. Walpole and Mr. Bennett really want to float a new religion, it is no good for them to sit down in an arm-chair and think it out. Their best course is to take hashish or something, and then they may get a revelation of sorts. And that revelation, however ludicrous it may be, may possibly catch on as a freak religion. But it will catch on precisely because it is not theirs.

THE STUPIDITY OF ANIMALS

THERE was a letter the other day in one of these morning papers under the title "Do dogs dream?" It was a very brief communication, and I judged (from all my experience of people who have the itch for epistolography) that it must have been an excerpt from a much longer document. Possibly the writer would have made his meaning clearer if he had been allowed more space; one can only guess.

The problem whether dogs dream might be the subject of endless controversy, because for practical purposes they never wake. They never come down to breakfast and tell us what they have been dreaming about. A psychoanalyst might say that dogs dream, because he is quite prepared to tell you that you have been dreaming when you know perfectly well that you haven't. But we others can only say that dogs when they are asleep sometimes go through the same motions as people go through in their sleep and then tell us when they wake up that they have been dreaming (that sentence takes some parsing), and that's all there is to it. "Hunting in his sleep," we say, but how do we know it is not a matter of digestion?

Be that as it may, this epistolographer went one better by asserting that this dog laughed in its sleep. Just like that. It may have been

one of these humorists who try it on to see whether they can catch the sub-editor napping. I am afraid it is far more likely to have been a genuine case of dogmania. There was no note put in to explain whether this dog was in the habit of laughing during its waking moments, and there was no accompanying portrait to show how the dog did it. How does a dog laugh ? According to King David, it is possible to grin like a dog, but that only means that when a man grins he shows his teeth like a dog. I have seen a dog show his teeth, but it never suggested to me that the dog was amused : the laughter, if laughter it was, was not infectious. Who does not know that the best-drawn animals cease to look like animals at all the moment they are represented as laughing ? Well, there is the hyena, and there is the laughing jackass. But is the hyena really amused ? It is terrible to think what a lot of funny thoughts must pass through its mind, all unbidden by outward circumstances, only to be lost to posterity.

Mr. Chesterton's new book, " The Everlasting Man," has some excellent thoughts on the absoluteness of the difference between animals and men. Undeterred by the hyena, he claims laughter as one of man's characteristic privileges. The difference, he says, between a man and a monkey is not that a man draws better than a monkey, but that a man does draw, however badly, whereas a monkey does not draw at all. Again one might distinguish ; a monkey does draw, no doubt, if it imitates a man drawing, but it does not notice whether its pencil has a lead in or not ; and if any-

thing emerges from the process, it is doubtful if even a futurist critic would be able to praise it as a work of genius.

Humour and art are extreme instances of the difference, since each springs essentially from the reflective principle in Man. The old-fashioned philosophers put the thing more simply by saying that Man has intelligence and the brutes have not. And that is, of course, the assumption which underlies all the good animal books which have ever been written, from the Batracho-myomachia to Uncle Remus and " The Wind in the Willows." It is funny to make animals talk and think only because we know that as a matter of fact they don't talk and don't think.

Perhaps they are right not to. There is a great deal to be said for not talking ; and, to judge by the quotations Dr. Sheen has collected in his new book, " God and Intelligence," the philosophers nowadays are coming to the conclusion that it is rather a mistake to think. " For my part," wrote William James, " I have found myself compelled to give up logic." Why such philosophers are allowed to keep their chairs it is hard to understand ; it is as if a doctor should turn Christian Scientist. But, granted that the intellect is on the whole a thing to be discouraged, it still does divide us from the beasts. We have not yet managed to live it down altogether. Strap-hanging has not yet quite reduced us to that life of mere prehensility which would make us one with our putative ancestors at the Zoo ; we have not quite acquired the happy disposition of the jackass, which can laugh when there is no joke

at all. This degrading handicap, intelligence, still distinguishes the sons of men.

The beasts haven't got it, and we know they haven't got it; no need to discuss here whether they are the better or the worse off. I have thought sometimes that dogs are sorry they have no souls and cats are glad they have no souls. Or, rather, I have said it, but I have not thought it; obviously it is nonsense. What is so baffling is that people will go on telling you stories about their dogs and cats which conclusively prove that their dogs and cats possess intelligence without seeming to see that in that case the whole of our views of life must be entirely revised. If a dog has intelligence presumably it has a soul, and, if it has a soul, are we not committing murder when we shoot it in its old age? If a dog really "understands every word you say," are you always careful to turn it out of the room before one of these smoking-room stories is told? If a dog is really "the best friend you have," why don't you let it kill the chickens? Until the philosophers have succeeded in providing us with a cheap substitute for intelligence, may we not as well use our intelligence when we talk about animals, and get rid of all this metaphorical nonsense?

No; don't write to me and deluge me with stories of calculating horses and learned pigs, and the tricks monkeys have been taught to do on the music-halls. Anybody can tell those stories. I myself once gave, by mistake, a bent coin to the elephant to put into the scent machine. When nothing happened the elephant first patted the machine in the stomach

with its trunk, and then, with a still better inspiration, curled up its trunk and blew down the slot. I have often told this story and always been called a liar, so that I am beginning to doubt it myself, but I know that it really happened. In any case, it is no more extraordinary than plenty of things which do happen. Anyhow, it is my story, and I refuse to admit that the elephant in my story showed intelligence. It didn't think to itself, "Let us see, what will be the best way of preventing this young gentleman feeling that he has been defrauded? Perhaps the machine wants oiling and is working badly; let us see whether a little pressure will have a good effect." What it did show was sagacity—an uncanny instinct for doing what looked like the right thing.

The *sagacity* of animals is extraordinary, but it is something quite different from intelligence. A pigeon can find its way home to a place from which it has been transported in a basket; put an intelligent aviator in a basket and see whether he can find his way home without directions. A Welsh collie can do the most amazing feats in rounding up sheep, but not by intelligence; if intelligence were the quality needed, a Welsh collier would be able to do it still better. Animal sagacity is far more like that extraordinary aplomb which sometimes inspires the acrobatic feats of the hopelessly drunk: a sort of instinct which comes from nowhere—you might even guess that it comes from not being burdened with an intelligence.

What I want to do is to make a collection of stories which illustrate the stupidity of animals. Look at the dog which goes on barking its

teeth out at you as long as it is chained up, even when you are walking with its owner, and then comes up and licks your hand the moment its chain is slipped! Obviously, it has not begun on the path of intelligence, for it has not learned to make any distinction between subject and object. If it had ceased to regard me as an enemy when I took off my dog-collar, it might have been anti-clericalism. But ceasing to regard *me* as an enemy because *it* has not a collar on is sheer absence of the intellectual faculty. Look at the way a bird goes on flying with its nose against the window, and apparently expecting that sooner or later it will get out! That is not mere defect of sight; a man restrained by a totally invisible obstacle would draw back and take a kick at it; the bird, being unable to perceive the glass, is equally unable to conceive it. I wish one of these daily papers would offer a prize for the best story of animal unintelligence.

I am sorry to have wasted so much time over the obvious, but why will people refuse to see that it is obvious? Why will everybody assert that his dog has an intellect, still more her dog, without noticing the anomaly that no other animal has?

ON KINDNESS IN TRAINS

IT seems to be a habit with some sub-editors to fill up odd spaces in columns by sifting these and similar articles in the search for a grain or two of truth, which they reprint as "Wisdom of the Week," or what not. I always study, when this happens, the dicta of my fellow-sages, and it was thus that I struck, the other day, on a generalisation attributed to Lord Monkswell: "The time spent sitting in a railway train is in most cases useless for the purposes of business, pleasure, development, or repose."

With that verdict all those who are doomed (like myself) to constant travelling will, I take it, be in general agreement. I can now repeat, in their order, the names of the fifty-three stations from Euston to Manchester (London Road) almost without mistake: a melancholy testimony to the extensiveness and to the vacuity of my travelling experience. The other day we were going to Rugby via Northampton, resisting the siren attractions of Weedon Junction; and the man opposite me said—he really did say: "It makes a nice change, going round by Northampton." But then he was a very fine specimen of train-man. He also said: "Very refreshing, I always think, celery," which I regard as a pure humour-test. But that is the state you get into: you can greet even Northampton with a cheer.

As for repose, that is a matter of constitutional habit. I cannot (as presumably Lord

Monkswell cannot) sleep in trains. Repose in such surroundings is at best a rare grace; dignity in repose even rarer. Business can be done; I sometimes meet a predatory nigger-minstrel, who gets into a fresh compartment at each of our numerous stopping-places; and, according to the legend of our line, he has amassed a fortune with his abominable guitar. There are energetic people, sometimes, in corner seats who take out notebooks or files of letters and go through the motions of adding up figures, as if to impress their fellow-travellers. You can counter this, if you are a schoolmaster, by publicly correcting exercises, which gives you at once the reputation of being book-learned. But these are casual employments. You cannot do anything really important on the train. You cannot write decently, even on the smoothest stretches of the Great Western; and a typewriter would look rather silly—besides, some companies insist on charging you for it as a kind of bicycle, perambulator, or go-cart.

There are pleasures in railway-travelling, or, rather, anodynes for the boredom of it. Reading and talking are those most commonly practised, but either of these would demand (and will probably get, before long) a whole article to itself. And there are games, too, that may be played; but there is another whole article ready to hand. As a rough truth, Lord Monkswell's dictum is obviously right. We take our pleasures sadly, we Ixions of the permanent way. Even you, suburban quartets who play Nap across your (and my) knees, play it with a sort of dogged determina-

tion to kill time at all costs; your features register no poignant emotion even at the hour of triumph. How curiously, by the way, Society divides itself into the people who talk about a "knave" and the people who talk about a "jack."

It is with the fourth item of Lord Monkswell's indictment that I would rather concern myself. I am not quite clear what he means by "development." Muscular development could hardly be expected within such a confined space; and mental development would naturally be classed under "business." I hope he meant moral development, for it is here that I wish to qualify his statement. I believe the train holds out indefinite possibilities of moral development; to resist all the temptations in the way of selfishness and unmannerliness which travelling provides would sweeten our characters indefinitely. But I'm afraid we don't try much.

I am not referring to you, who are reading this article; you are on a suburban train, and on a suburban train only a saint, or the next best thing to a saint, could exercise any of the Christian virtues except that of hope. But there are, believe me, trains which whistle through Broxbourne and take Croydon in their stride; big trains with corridors and refreshment cars, which go more than twenty miles in the hour. It is in these that we ought to find, that Samuel Smiles would have found, room for self-improvement. It is often the only thing there is room for.

May I make it a series of Don'ts? It is an ugly format, but convenient.

Don't argue with the booking clerk, or set him conundrums. It is a statistical mystery that the average time occupied by a man in buying a ticket is 14.8 seconds, whereas that occupied by a woman is 33.1 Partly, of course, it is done by fumbling, but more by discussing family troubles with the booking clerk. Also, even since our war experience, there is still a certain amount of dirty work going on in the way of attempting to break the queue ; such attempts, of course, should be actionable. Let me repeat here that I exonerate the suburbans, who are better trained by daily habit.

Don't rave at porters or other officials when it's the company's fault, not theirs. I was travelling not long since with a Benedictine (not the kind you mean), who was accosted by a porter of whom he had asked a simple question, with the remark, "Excuse my mentioning it, sir, but we don't often get a smile nowadays." The smile in question (it is about 1,500 years old) was no doubt involuntary ; but it is worth remembering for us others. When porters annoy the community by going on strike, do them the justice to remember that they have little cause to love the community, because they always see humanity at its worst—its thrusting, grabbing, hurrying, expostulating, bullying, button-holing, imbecile, unreasonable worst.

If you can't find an empty carriage—I am assuming that every reasonable traveller wants an empty carriage if he can get one—don't make straight for the one that has fewest people in it. Don't disturb a solitude or *tête-à-tête ;* take the fourth window-seat that

is left by a trio of strangers. If you are forced to get into a carriage with eight people already in it, sit down on the side that *doesn't* make room for you, to punish it for its selfishness. If you are a non-smoker, don't get into a smoking carriage ; on the long-distance trains there is seldom enough smoking-room to go round.

Having secured your carriage, don't spread coats, hats, and dispatch-boxes about so as to create a dummy army of imaginary travellers. This habit, often found, I am sorry to say, in people of otherwise irreproachable character, is a criminal one, and deserves a month without the option. Don't pretend that you aren't sure whether the empty seats are unoccupied. Don't scowl at people who try to enter, or annoy them by the ineffectual protest of a leg-barrage. Don't look suspiciously at their luggage on the rack as if it was meant to be a booby-trap.

During the journey, don't sing, whistle, hum, cut your nails, spit, throw orange-peel on the floor, or otherwise behave as if you were alone when you aren't. Don't try to lure shy people into a conversation ; and beware especially of trying to talk shop to clergymen. (I am always mistaken for an Anglican at first, because I can answer the calls. But a certain lack of enthusiasm betrays me ; and then they tell me they have no prejudice against Roman Catholics. I should hope not ; it would be very disgraceful if they had. What would they think if I told them I had no prejudice against commercial travellers ?) If you have a child with you, offer it sixpence if it will

refrain from asking questions, and a beating if it rattles things about.

Don't talk in whispers to the friends who accompany you, or catch their eyes and giggle. Any nervous stranger will imagine that the joke is at his expense. Don't stare at your fellow-travellers if they eat sandwiches; eating is a quite common habit, and you have seen it done before. Don't air your grievances about excessive cab fares, etc., for the benefit of your fellow-passengers, or deliver lectures to them about the foreign countries you have travelled in. Don't talk to your friends about controversial matters in religion, politics, etc., when strangers are present; it is annoying to the strangers and still more embarrassing to the friends.

Finally, shun officiousness. Don't hand your newspaper to a stranger unless there is considerable probability that he wants it; don't indicate bits of it to him under the rubric "That's a good one, eh?"; don't tell him the names of all the stations you pass when he has expressed no curiosity on the point.

In a word, railway travelling is the best possible school of human patience. I try to keep about a third of these rules myself.

THE WORLD'S REQUIEM

THE celebration of Armistice Day is becoming a curious resultant of forces. There has been from the first a natural inclination to make it into a solemn commemoration of those who offered the sacrifice of death. There was an inclination, equally natural at first, to make it into an annual revival of that sudden outburst of relief which the November of 1918 meant for all of us. There is a patriotic impulse to commemorate a national victory. And there is the permanent demand, among a large and ill-defined section of our society, for any sort of annual event which will serve as an excuse for a spree.

Of those forces, all except the last dwindle, from year to year, in intensity ; Nature has her statutes of limitations, and it must be so. Nobody really thinks about the people who died at Agincourt ; not even the Fellows of All Souls, who by their charter have no right to do anything else. Nobody really thinks even about those who died in the Crimean war. And it is certain, I suppose, that in fifty years' time the Cenotaph will have become a mere object of curiosity. The poet or the philosopher will be able to muse there (as he waits for his taxi to get free of the traffic) on the mutability of human things. "Here, too, honour has its rewards ; here, too, are tears for human fortunes, and mortal sorrows touch the heart." But there will be no spontaneous tears shed in its neighbourhood. That vein of pathos will

have been worked out. And, although (thank God) we are not far on as yet on that road, there is an almost imperceptible yearly change in the public attitude ; there is a faintly felt law of diminishing returns.

The second inclination is drying up much faster. Even in 1918, although the sense of relief was overwhelming and impossible to escape, when at last you could throw your curtains open and flood the street with light, at last scrutinise your post without terror, and scan the posters with indifference, even then the publicmind was divided as to the propriety of expressing such relief by mafficking. There were several enterprising chemists near Trafalgar Square who all through that week advertised some sedative compound as a cure for "Peace Headache"—a droll form of diagnosis.

Some of us were wet-blankets even then, but the rest saw to it that there were plenty of cakes and ale ; and the Influenza, ironical sharp-shooter that lay in wait for the relics of our population, spread himself at those festive gatherings. Next year—well, it was a pity to let traditions die out ; the next—something ought to be done about it, and so Victory Balls and Armistice suppers became part of the year's programme, and may linger on indefinitely. For there will always be some patriots wanting to stir the national blood, and there will always be some whose blood will not be stirred unless there is dancing and drinking to do it with.

For the settlement of the yearly wrangle between those who want to feast and those who want to fast on Armistice Day I would suggest

a very simple and an almost practicable remedy. The police should insist that any public festivities held on that occasion should be limited in their personnel; only those should participate who could appear in War Service medals. To those who fought, Armistice Day is a second birthday: they achieved a second time the right to live. Let them celebrate it then as a birthday, and each, I suppose, must have the right to introduce one lady as his partner. The annual festivity will thus die down, and in the end die out by a natural process. What considerations it will suggest to the philosopher when, in 1968, a few toothless septuagenarians shuffle wearily round Covent Garden!

For us others the day should be observed in a different spirit. If we are sufficiently our own masters to dispose of it as we will, we should spend it in decent quiet and the solitude of memory. If I ever get a holiday on Armistice Day there is a pile of letters, scrawled in violet pencil, that shall be read through again. For, if we had decent human instincts, the Armistice itself reminded us not only of what it had brought back to us, but of what it could never bring back: if we forget the former we are only ungrateful; if we forget the latter we are unnatural.

Meanwhile, it looks as if Armistice Day would be celebrated much as usual. A frequent but fleeting visitor to the Metropolis, I am driven to much contemplation of advertisement hoardings—on the Tube particularly, for I have the Troglodyte instinct of the country cousin. I feel like St. Paul at Athens; I pass

by and see the idols of the men of London. Æsculapius is easily first ; Thalia second (unless the revue has a muse of its own) ; Apollo with his lyre a bad third. And just now the fixtures for November the Eleventh prodominate on all sides—though even now there are traces of shyness ; one announcement, for example, is of a " Guy Fawkes Revel." I doubt if anyone could really want to revel about Guy Fawkes who has seen facsimiles of his signature after the successive rackings which he underwent ; most of us would have confessed to any crime, however improbable, under such suasion. And granting that there was a real Gunpowder Plot, many people nowadays would hesitate about making the preservation of the British Legislature a ground for revelry. No, I suspect this is really an Armistice celebration which has been ante-dated and re-named in deference to public feeling. Most of the announcements, at any rate, point us back to 1918.

And of these, the one that most riveted my attention was that of a choral society which is to produce a " World Requiem " or " World's Requiem," I forget which. There is a splendid irony about that phrase that nearly made me miss a connection.

The World's Requiem ! So it must be, I think, to anyone who was between the ages of twenty and forty during the Great War. It was a world we laid to rest with that final salvo of guns. Those groupings of the human race to which we belonged—school friends, college friends, friends of daily acquaintance—were broken up now ; death had left irreplaceable

gaps in them, change of circumstances and of residence had completed the process. Thenceforward there would be fresh groupings, of course. Man does not live alone. But only the chambers of memory would preserve for us the record of those circles which had been ours in the past ; they had belonged to us, and we to them, and the vital contact of them could never be re-established. The Cenotaph was a White Line that separated the two halves of life for us. A dead world.

Cynicism might push the allegory of the "World Requiem" even further. It might ask, I mean, whether the world which is left to us is not in truth a dead world, when you compare our modern listlessness with the vital energy of ten years back. Oh, we were ridiculous, of course. We believed in idiotic propaganda stories ; our sense of values was quite distorted, the whole world mapped out for us in black and white between the Central Empires and the Entente, with a few sinister patches of grey. Few of us looked forward to the reckoning which would have to be paid by the victors or prepared ourselves for the fact that we should have to live on the same globe with the vanquished. We thought, just as our soldiers fought, in blinkers. But we did, for a moment, taste the sharp tang of public loyalty ; we felt civic triumphs and civic disasters ; the events of the world found their repercussion in our own experience instead of passing us by. In that nightmare world we were alive.

We were "alive," that is, to everything (practically) that was going on in the world.

Now, most of us find that we have lost all hope of hearing any good news from Russia, that we aren't quite certain whether we wanted M. Caillaux to save France, that we think Mussolini is a remarkable fellow, but wouldn't like to say that we approve of his goings-on. We have lost the sense of being an integral part of that world whose doings are recorded for us in the newspapers; we stare, stupefied, at a phantasmagoria. A week or two ago the *Daily Telegraph* acquainted us with the fact that 8000 Chaldeans had been deported from their country by the Turks, that 300 women and children had been murdered in cold blood, that other unnamable atrocities had accompanied the proceedings. Ten years ago we should have been bursting with generous indignation at such news. Oh, quite so; our motives would, in fact, have been partisan motives. But the news would have had the power to thrill us; we should not have turned on languidly to the Law Reports. No doubt it is quite all right, and the experts understand these things better than we do. Only, is it our dead that the Cenotaph commemorates, or our dead selves?

But those who achieved their armistice before that crowning November, sharing in death with their enemy the ground either side had won, inch by inch, painfully, from the other—their glory at least is imperishable, owing nothing to short human memories and passing human fashions. Their actions live, recorded somehow, somewhere, in that world of which ours is only a pale reflection—will live when their memorials have crumbled, and our bodies lie with theirs in the companionable dust.

THESE MOTORISTS

WHEN anybody comes into my room and finds a five-shilling postal order from an editor flung carelessly on the table, he always says, " Good Lord, man, you ought to get a car."

To this conversational lead I have a variety of answers. I know it looks more candid if you make the same answer on each occasion to everybody. But then, the reason why I don't get a car is a whole lot of reasons, all mixed up, and there are probably a whole heap of other reasons of which I'm not conscious at all. What right have my friends to expect that I shall indulge in a minute analysis of my own psychology merely to gratify their inquisitiveness ? The immediate necessity is to produce a good, substantial reason which will commend itself to the inquisitor at once ; otherwise he will lure you on into a horrible conversation about makes of cars.

But the most satisfactory reason, because it is bound to spike the other man's guns, is to say, " I think there are too many cars as it is." You say this with a disapproving air, as if you were prepared to demonstrate to him that he doesn't really need a car. He is frightened of that, and the subject drops. Why should people want to talk about makes of cars ? I have a very good toothbrush, but I have no idea what make it is. If I ever do get a car, I

shall refuse to let my friends know its maker's name. I shall tell them that I bought it at a shop.

From repetition, I am almost beginning to believe in the reason alleged above. Fifty thousand more cars on the road next year, so they tell us. I suppose they mean on various different roads ; if they were all on the London to Birmingham road, I have just discovered, they would occupy the whole distance, assuming that each was 12ft. long. This disclosure has given a great fillip to the motoring correspondents of the newspapers, and they all write earnestly about the Road Problem and the Future of the Road. They all seem convinced that something must be done about the road, so as to make it hold more cars.

Observe that the grievance is not a grievance of the pedestrian ; he is not on in this act. And, indeed, why should he be ? In London, it is always quite easy to cross the street if you wait till the next block ; the only disturbing piece of news we could get would be that there were to be 50,000 more scooters on the pavement. And in the country, we have long since passed into that stage of civilisation which distinguished the days of Samgar, the son of Anath, when the high roads were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways.

Mr. Belloc has pointed out that railways are a blessing to the pilgrim, because they divert humanity into fixed channels, instead of letting it overflow everywhere. So it is with the great roads out of London, they are intolerable in themselves, but if you resolutely travel against the grain, from high-road to high-road along

the little lanes, you surround yourself with rural peace. I could show you where you can walk four or five miles at a stretch without meeting a soul, all within thirty miles of London. I did once compose a curse against motorists, which started *Maledictus sis, pessime motorum, ut sis motor immobilis et non habens motionem qualemcumque, ad confusionem et erube scentiam tuam ; germinet tibi terra spinas et tribulos ; fiant viae tuae tenebrae et lubricum, et non sit qui te lubricet,* and so on. But I have adopted Samgar's recipe now.

No, the real grievance is felt by the motorists ; they want more solitude. It is an ancient but a valuable definition of the word " tripper " to say that it means " any tourist except myself." Similarly, the problem of the road is the existence of any cars on it other than one's own ; more especially, of cars larger, swifter, and more prosperous-looking than one's own. In his dreams, the motorist is like Dido in her nightmare, he seems " always to be travelling by a long road unaccompanied "—a good, broad road, with a few chickens and village idiots for bunkers, but otherwise destitute of incident.

He wants speed, " speed in the knees of the Lord," as W. E. Henley put it in one of his later poems, though I could never understand why the theological reference was fetched in. It does not matter to him how the scene is laid, whether the " wings " consist of russet autumn woods, grey stone villages clustered round little streams of water-cress, rugged mountain-sides with bare scarps standing out amongst the heather, or hooting, clanking factories separated from one another by

stagnant canals ; it is all one to him as long as he can knock sixty out of her.

But the real ugly fact of the road is the motorist himself, multiplied indefinitely. The real fact is that the ownership of a car is becoming a silly fetish—it is like the pride of owning a toothbrush when we were small, with the difference, however, that the owner of the toothbrush was content to own it ; the owner of the motor-car must needs be using it. Pass through any suburb, and watch how the type of house which distinguishes our present civilisation is continually changing, and changing in a uniform direction. The newer the eligible building site, the smaller is the bungalow that occupies the centre of it, the larger is the garage at the side.

If we go on like this much longer, we shall return to a nomadic stage of culture in which men will live, like the ancient Scythians, or the modern gipsies, in caravans ; only the caravans will all be built for speed, and they will never rest except when a puncture necessitates it. Till that day, the motor problem is incidentally exacerbating the housing problem. We all want toy houses with a smaller nursery and a larger garage.

It would not be so disconcerting if the boom in the motor trade reflected a general trade boom ; but we all know that it does not. If we were told that there would be 50,000 more trains on the line next year we should say, " Ha ! British industries are looking up at last ! " We should assume that the greater quantity of traffic implied a greater necessity of distributing commodities (excellent mid-

Victorian word !), we should not imagine that there were to be 50,000 more trainloads of humanity travelling about just for the fun of the thing. It is true I know a man whose favourite holiday (he says) is to take an express to Weston-super-Mare, cross the line by the bridge, and take an express back ; but his case is rare.

Most speed enthusiasts want to drive, not to be driven ; and few of them have the advantages of another friend of mine, who is doing his apprenticeship as an engine-driver, and boasts that every now and then he can touch ninety-six. (I am going to look narrowly at the engine-driver in future, when I travel on that line.) But as humanity is in the average, an increased number of trains would mean an increased amount of business, whereas an increased number of cars means, it is to be feared, only an increase in a certain perverted sense of pleasure.

In that distinction lies the crux, and the solution too, if only the impossible would happen. Life, after all, may be divided for practical purposes into three elements, business, pleasure and golf. I am all for business cars ; the doctor, and everybody else who must needs get about, has every right to travel by car, owned or hired, until he reaches the nearest railway station with a practicable train service. And obviously the lorry is for many purposes a more efficient vehicle than the truck. I would not be narrow-minded ; I would issue facilities also to golfers for the use of motor transport. Already the countryside is disfigured with links at far too frequent intervals ; there would have

to be more of them still if our golfers were not provided with a fleet of cars to get about it—Black Marias to carry them off to the penal settlements where they spend the day breaking stones.

But the solution of the Road Problem is that nobody should be allowed to drive a car simply for the pleasure of driving it. Policemen should have the right to stop motorists and ask them, not what pace they are travelling at, but what end their travelling has in view. If they admit that they are simply taking a joy-ride, their licences should be endorsed at once. If they must do it, a special road should be built for them ; it will consist of two moving platforms, going in opposite directions at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and, of course, you will only be allowed to drive against the current. Do not say that the element of excitement, so dear to the motorist's heart, will be absent from this performance. For if a puncture or any similar accident brings you to a dead halt, you will collide at a speed of over fifty miles an hour with the car immediately behind you. Or should it be a hundred ? No, fifty.

Meanwhile you will get the illusion of speed. That speed is an illusion is evident : aviators say they are quite unconscious of their motion. Speed is motion consciously contrasted with stationary objects around you ; and particularly pedestrians. But we pedestrians are wandering happily among the little, forgotten villages, on splashy, zigzag roads that ought to be marked Z.

HELPFULNESS

THE other day, sitting at breakfast in a restaurant car, I solved the chief problem of human action.

It was a quite simple incident that inspired me with the discovery. These great discoveries, it is notorious, are always made as the result of quite simple incidents—James Watt seeing the kettle steam and William Tell discovering firearms while shooting at an apple on his little boy's head. A waiter, not the man one tips, saw me doing my best with a roll, and hurried up with a basket crying, " More toast, sir ? " He may, of course, have been a philanthropist, but I did not think so. He may have feared that his superior would accuse him of negligence, but nothing I have ever seen in restaurant cars fortifies me in such a belief.

It seemed to me that what the man was suffering from was sheer helpfulness. He liked being the man of action ; he was proud of being able to walk down the car without having to apologise to anybody ; he felt like a man relieving a famine-stricken area. After all (I reflected), why is a helping called a helping ? Why do you help people—in very refined circles even " assist " people—to pickled onions or whatever it may be ? Was it possible that

fathers feed their children not out of natural affection merely, or human shame, but out of this strange instinct of helpfulness ?

I see that I have solved the problem before stating it, a capital error ; let me retrace my steps. We all of us learned in our youth to explode the fallacy of the " economic man "—that fiction of statisticians, who is supposed to spend his whole life getting as much as he can out of the world and giving as little as possible, doing as little as possible, in return. Statisticians still talk as if this man existed, but we all know that he doesn't. Some time ago there was, or there was talk of, what was called a " ca' canny " strike. The railwaymen, or whoever it was, were to do their bare minimum duty and no more. All the little pieces of casual service, the little acts of politeness, which a man throws in without expecting to have his salary raised for it would be done away. I cannot remember what happened, or whether the thing ever did come off. But the very fact that it was possible to talk of it shows what a wide margin there is between the world as the statisticians conceive it and the world as it really is.

As a matter of brute fact, about half the trouble which is taken in this singular world of ours is taken without hope of reward, of advancement, even (for the most part) of recognition. People spend long hours sitting at committee-meetings, reading through authors' manuscripts in type (a hideous proceeding), giving advice to young men, working in their neighbours' gardens, inspecting reformatories, delivering popular lectures, singing

after dinner, mending punctures other than their own, raising subscriptions for preserving objects of national interest, and so on. For these and similar activities they get no reward and very little praise ; they incur considerable enmity—what makes them do it ?

The pessimist, who believes that all human action can be analysed in the long run as the outcome of purely selfish motives, is hopelessly thrown out of his stride by glaring facts of this kind. The optimist sails in smiling, and claims them as proof that, after all, the world is full of kindness ; there is no reason to despair of a race which confronts us continually with such striking examples of altruism. Another law than that of economics must be invoked, if we are to explain how it is that men scorn delights and live laborious days in promoting the welfare and serving the convenience of others. Dickens was right, after all, and there is a vast fund of Cheerybility being expended all around us.

So the optimist ; but the realist, in that cold, pitiless light that beats upon a breakfast car, finds room for hesitation. Is it really possible that pure altruism dictates all these activities ? If so, how is it that the public philanthropist is so often a plague and a kill-joy in the home ? —that people who prevent cruelty to children may be found nagging at their husbands, and people who can easily be prevailed upon to sing at charity concerts cannot be prevailed upon to stop singing in the bath ?

The word that gave the realist his key to the true facts of the situation was (I saw) helpfulness. Go back to the railway carriage and see it

at work. That man who has his feet up on the opposite cushion, in defiance of regulations, and has to take them down because you want to sit there, how he glares at you! The milk of human hindness is curdled in his bosom. Now turn diffidently, and ask him if the train stops at Much Boosting. In a moment he has constituted himself your guardian angel—has told you that the train does stop there, and how many stations away Much Boosting is, what is the market-day there, what inn you ought to stay at; and, when you reach it, who more ready than he to inform you of the fact, in corroboration of bawling porters and flaming notice-boards?

What has wrought the transformation? Sheer helpfulness. He has begun to like you for giving him the opportunity of being helpful. His bosom thrills with a generous glow of false philanthropy. There is no limit to the pride a man will take in such performances. Once, early in the war, I travelled with a carriage-full of soldiers; there was only one civilian present besides myself, an active man and of full military age. One of the soldiers was trying to open the window and bungling it a good deal. "Allow me!" said the civilian, and had it down in a moment. And what answer do you think he made to the soldier's gratitude? "Not at all, sir," he said; "what I say is, you're doing your best for us, and we've got to do our best for you." I have not invented this—I could not invent it: it is the sort of thing that happens only in real life.

They analysed helpfulness recently in the psychological laboratory at Pharsalia, Ore.

The analysis showed, I am told, the following results :—

	Per cent.
Love of interference	32
Pride of workmanship	22
Desire for gratitude	11
Desire for admiration	11
Self-importance	10
Reaction from suppressed contempt	9
Genuine moral altruism	5

Observe, it is not a wholly immoral, or even a wholly non-moral, sentiment. John Stuart Mill could have made a far better business of his Utilitarianism if he had recognised the existence of this motive, but he would have been wrong in his estimate. Let nobody who has the helpful habit go away saying that he will give it up in future. The object of this article is rather to persuade helpful people to be humble, and to recognise how little of the genuine Vitamine A there was about their acts of charity.

We all suffer from it, of course, though the subject of our helpfulness will vary, according to the list of our little vanities. I am helpful, for example, about the following things :—

(1) Digging out obstructions from a pipe when no scientific apparatus for the purpose is available ;

(2) Writing Latin inscriptions ;

(3) Helping small children to break the furniture ;

(4) Taking unused stamps off envelopes.

When I have done any of these things I

would, if I had an ounce of honesty in me, say, "Thank you," to the person who gave me the opportunity of doing them. Even as I write there is a cow outside scratching itself with great difficulty against a post. If I were really altruistic, I should go down with a stick and help it. But, then, cow-scratching is not one of my fortes.

Meanwhile, it is comforting to hope that if our good actions are adulterated by so strong a percentage of helpfulness, some dash of helpfulness extenuates our bad actions in return. How easily men are accused of sticking to office through "love of power"! I conceive that a conscientious democrat might say it of Mussolini. What if Mussolini is really in the position of the man who *will* look out your trains for you in Bradshaw because he does it better than you can? One has often wanted to assassinate such people. Of women, at least, it may be safely said that nearly all the harm they do arises out of this helpful spirit; Eve herself probably thought that Adam was looking a little pulled down.

So I mused in that disillusioned vein which comes to him who makes his breakfast in public. Then, to distract my mind, I turned to Mr. So-and-so's helpful article on religion in the morning paper.

THE JAUNDICED EYE

I HAVE just recovered from jaundice. I take the opportunity of mentioning this so as to assure my doctor that I *have* recovered, thank him. It is a disease so much commoner in metaphor than in real life that the literal experience of it has a certain charm for the curious mind ; though indeed there is no dignity about it, only discomfort.

My first care was to make a friend consult the Encyclopædia, and find out what the word was derived from, what were the causes of the ailment, what famous people had died of it, and so on. He found nothing of interest, except the statement that it is sometimes due to excessive indulgence in drink. This, I am sure, is to mistake the cause for the effect. Jaundice gives rise to excessive lifting of the elbow ; I found myself, like the gentleman in the song, " drinking, drinking, drinking." But only barley-water : well over a gallon of it in the day. It was piteous to think of all the potential whisky which disappeared in this way, undistilled and untaxed.

It is a belief as old as Lucretius that the jaundiced patient not only turns yellow himself, but sees everything round him yellow. The second part of that belief was never verified in my experience, and I believe it to be one of these medicinal lies which the faculty propagates in the public interest. You cannot deny the patient the use of a looking-glass when he

brushes his hair : it would arouse suspicion. It is inevitable, therefore, that he should scan himself anxiously whenever the opportunity arises, and (from the depression which the disease engenders) always fancy that there is no sign of an improvement in his health. He points triumphantly to ocular demonstration : " Look, nurse ; I'm just as yellow as I was yesterday ! "

By way of countering this gambit on his part, the doctors have invented, as Plato would say, a noble lie. " Not a bit," they tell you ; " everything looks a bit yellow to you, including your face, because you've still got the thing on you. But, to the unjaundiced eye, you are visibly paler." Thus cozened into the belief that his colouring is half subjective, half objective, the patient wearies of the controversy and consents to get well.

This I admit to be conjecture ; for myself, I recovered that schoolgirl complexion without putting any strain upon the veracity of those who attended me. But, be the origin of the idea what it may, there is a certain sort of modernistic truth about it. With jaundice, you do not see the world yellow (at least, I never did), but your spiritual vision is distorted exactly in the proverbial way.

To be in bed for a fortnight without danger, without pain, without fever—what experience, objectively considered, could be more satisfying ? In this democratic age, your sick man is the only genuine tyrant. He cancels all his boring engagements ; he is ill. He neglects all his correspondence ; he is ill. Little kindnesses are showered upon him ; friends come

to sympathise and sit on his toes ; people take his health seriously, and what is more delightful than to have one's health taken seriously by other people ? As for those who have care of him, he can order them about like slaves ; everything must be fetched and carried. Motion, that old enemy to our peace of mind, is banished from him ; he is at liberty even to be selfish, and neglect everybody else's troubles in the contemplation of his own. Upon my word, there is nothing like it.

Nature, that wise old Republican, has foreseen the difficulty, and has decreed that the jaundiced patient, like the tyrant in the copy-books, should be unhappy, causelessly unhappy. For no conceivable reason (unless you count the barley-water), he lies there in a wicked bad temper with all the world. He detects a thousand trivial negligences in the treatment of his case ; he broods over minor worries until they haunt him like nightmares ; he has no gust and no heart for anything except interminable games of patience, and these in their turn irritate while they enthral him. Fancy, the solace of the bedridden, is overcast with a gross cloud of pessimism. That is what it really means to see yellow.

It is a chastening experience, because all the time your horse sense is sufficiently awake to realise that you are being unreasonable. You know all the time that the world is not as yellow as you see it. It gives you an increased respect for the wise psychology of our ancestors, who knew nothing about traumata and neuroses, but made wonderfully shrewd guesses about the influence of the body on the mind—

so shrewd that we still use their jargon in common talk.

"Spleen," for example, what an excellent word! I have no notion where or what my spleen is, because the doctor left it out in the diagram he drew for me to explain the jaundice. But who can doubt that there is some physical feature in his inside which corresponds to and partly explains his splenetic behaviour? I have no idea whether there is any scientific ground for the word "melancholy," but it sounds as if it must be right.

And the very name of humour, which is only good humour abbreviated—surely they were right in associating it with its presence or absence with the distribution of fluids in one's system, tempered well or amiss? There you are again; "temper" and "temperament" only denote the mixture, judicious or injudicious, of these our bodily humours. Medical accuracy these sages may have lacked, but at least they had got hold of a sound root principle, that we shall never understand our own or other people's behaviour until we give fuller recognition to the influence of digestion upon life.

The doubt that I drank in with my barley-water was this—is it possible that jaundice is more widely-spread among the human race than the rough diagnosis of our practitioners recognises? I am not being funny at the expense of General Chang and those numerous rivals of his whom we all find it so difficult to distinguish from him. But isn't it possible that there is a kind of suppressed jaundice (like suppressed influenza) which leaves no mark

upon the exterior pigment of the body, but works its ravages in the mind ?

Some doctor told me that all human beings are to a more or less degree tuberculous ; what if we are all jaundiced, just a little ? Perhaps we caught it during the war, from those extraordinary substitutes for beans we used to eat at restaurants when we had forgotten our meat-tickets. Certainly it seems to have been on the increase since the war, this habit of grousing and wanting to sack the lot and putting the worst construction on everything. At least, so it seemed *me judice*, or perhaps *me jaundice*—who knows ?

Is it possible that the modern novelists are wrong in their conviction that all marriages are unhappy marriages, and all heroes pathological cases, and all country folk worse than the brutes ; that indignant householders forget there were such things as rates and taxes before the war ; that the multitudinous prophets in the newspapers are letting their pessimism run away with them a little ? Is it possible that if they all went to bed and drank a gallon and a quart of barley water every day (I can tell you it takes some doing), they would be able to purge out their ill humours and see things differently ? Heaven knows I am guilty with the rest ; I am not preaching, only recording a doubt. It may be that they gave me too much barley-water, and I have been having twinges of optimism ever since.

At least let us give 1926 a fair chance. Let us start by giving life the benefit of the doubt, not assuming that a thing which we have lost has been stolen by dishonest persons, that the

people who didn't ask us to dinner to meet the So-and-so's were deliberately insulting us, that the housemaid breaks the china on purpose, that the shop didn't make a mistake, but was trying to charge us twice over. Let us try to believe that honesty, and kindliness, and self-respect are still abroad in the world, and will flourish all the more for a little personal encouragement from us.

The Abbé Moreux, who prophesied a cold winter, has prophesied a hot summer to follow it ; we shall be in need, all the more, of having our tempers under control. Among all the stories that are told of Blessed Thomas More, the one I like best is about the way in which he used to discourage want of charity in conversation. Whenever the talk took the form of unnecessary criticism, he would break in upon it by exclaiming, " They may say what they will, but I say that this house is a well-built house, and the architect who designed it was a clever fellow." Not that for most of us in these days that precise formula—there I am, at it already ! Shut up, can't you ? . . . What I was going to say was that it would be a good thing if we could each of us have a formula to meet the same situation. For want of a better, I would suggest " Have some barley-water."

HOURS WITH THE ALMANACK

A FRIEND, who cultivates the unexpected, gave me for a Christmas present a copy of Wiseacre's Almanack. (I have to call it that, in order to avoid the suspicion of advertisement.) I thought of this at first as a pleasing fancy, and took the book upstairs feeling that I should probably never use it. Yesterday, in preparing a lecture, I wanted to find some religious statistics, and brought down Wiseacre again; he gave me the point I wanted. But to-day I cannot go on writing that lecture. I sit poring over the Almanack, despised detective stories at my elbow, my meals neglected. What a book!

It is one of the most curious facts about our complicated human nature, and I recommend it to the notice of the psychologists, that written or printed matter of any kind is the most interesting when you use it as it was not meant to be used. For example, I hate reading the newspapers; but when I find myself opposite a man in a train who is reading one I can never resist trying to decipher the headlines upside down. This makes him angry after a time, and he offers me the paper; which spoils my fun, because I have not the face to read it upside down.

I am sure that there are others who share this prejudice, and one day I will get the editor

of the *Evening Standard* to let me put the headlines of my article upside down, like this :—

HOURS WITH THE ALMANACK.

so that the man opposite me will have to turn his paper upside down. (I wonder if the printer will manage that ?) The same principle holds with all reading. I mean to develop a theory of education which will make the young thirsty for knowledge through sheer curiosity. I believe if I wrote out the four Concords upside down on my blackboard I should be able to get some of the little brutes to take an interest in them. Anyhow, precisely because Mr. Wiseacre means his book to be taken down from time to time and consulted as a work of reference, I find myself poring over his pages out of sheer useless inquisitiveness.

As I say, what a book ! Once, when a party of us had sat round for some twenty minutes, baffled by a difficult light in an acrostic, a friend of mine said thoughtfully, " Of course, what one really wants is a dictionary of girls' Christian names." Here Wiseacre would be a disappointment ; but there are few such chinks in the armour. Whatever men do is for him, as for Juvenal, the farrago of his work.

Under " Chronological Notes," for example, he gives you in three columns the whole alleged pre-history of the world ; I have mastered the subject in ten minutes. I'm afraid I still don't believe it ; I don't see how you can believe people who aren't *quite* sure whether a particular period lasted 140,000 years or 700,000

years ; but it is something to know what they are saying. The Dodecanese, again—this was a subject I always preferred to discuss over the dinner-table in general terms, without itemising the islands which composed it ; here they are at my elbow. The difficulty is to go on writing this article, because the moment I dip into the book I go off into a kind of statistical trance. I had no idea that so many things were knowable.

Let me try the old system of giving one item under each letter of the alphabet. Archimandrite, The, 250 (a false reference ; it should be 256) ; Barrage on Sarda Canals (the gross catchment of which is 6,400,000 acres), 844 ; Coldest Day (Wiseacre, like Thucydides, is fond of record performances), 73 ; Dumb Societies (*O si sic omnes*), 303 ; Ether, The, 24-25 (and only a footnote at that) ; F.O.B., Meaning of (for cross-word fans, evidently), 484 ; Goths, King of the (an extra title of the Swedish Crown), 792 ; Herm (but no mention of Mr. Compton Mackenzie), 528 ; Ironmasters' quarterly meetings (I wonder why there are always so many advertisements of surgical appliances in books of reference ?), 6 ; Jelly Fish, Vitality of, 847 ; Kin, Next of, Tables (" for example, if the intestate left no issue and no parent, but brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces and great-nephews and great-nieces, the persons entitled would be the brothers and sisters and any nephews and nieces alive at the intestate's death who were children of a deceased brother or sister, and any grand-nephews and grand-nieces then alive who were the children of a nephew or niece then dead

who was the child of a brother or sister of the intestate then dead "), 408. A full-stop seems to be indicated here.

To resume. Limits of Horizon (I wonder that Wiseacre recognises their existence), 28 ; Milch Cattle (numbers of them in the world), 480 ; Nose, Hospitals for Diseases of, 327 ; Otter Hunting, Duration of, 820 ; Plunging Champions, 443 ; Quintal, How many fish are there in a, 423 ; Rouge Dragon, Who is the, 183 ; Saorstat Eireann (guess what that is), 523, 526-7 ; Teredo, Ravages of the, 845 ; Unst, Exports of, 512 ; Viscountesses in their own right, List of, 109 ; Wettest place in the world, 73 ; X-ray penetrations, 852 ; Yarn Measure (7 Leas make one Hank, and 18 Hanks make one Spindle), 424 ; Zaffarine Islands, 791.

It is an extraordinary conspectus of the world, and for that matter the universe ; and, like all our works of reference, it is infinitely soothing from the mere fact of seeing everything through British eyes. What sentiment could be more perfect than this (from p. 728) : " Chinese politics are not easy to understand, as they seem to consist in personal struggles between two or more armed parties, the admitted aim of the victors being personal gain." Yes, quite . . . . only, if you left out the word " armed," and, I am afraid, the word " admitted," might not the Chinese equivalent of Wiseacre perhaps—well, I don't know. But why *difficult* to understand ?

On these long winter evenings, when the wireless set is out of order and the dominoes have been mislaid, what better occupation could be found than to make up a General

Knowledge paper out of Wiseacre, and set it to your friends? This sort of thing :—

1. How many (*a*) street accidents, (*b*) deaths from snake-bite, (*c*) hurricanes, (*d*) tons of cod caught, (*e*) inhabited houses in the United Kingdom, (*f*) pounds' worth of articles destroyed by moths, (*g*) loaders, callers-off, ropers, and sheeters on the railways, (*h*) emigrants to the United States, are reported for the last recorded year?

2. Who holds at present the position of (*a*) Vice-Consul at Quito, (*b*) Portcullis, (*c*) Chief Steelwork and Reinforced Concrete Engineer to the Board of Works, (*d*) Croquet Champion, (*e*) Pithecanthropus, (*f*) Secretary to the Amalgamated Society of Journeymen Felt Hatters, (*g*) Finance Minister of Salvador, (*h*) Procurator-Fiscal of Stranraer?

3. What is the close season for (*a*) bustard, (*b*) smew, (*c*) wimbrel, (*d*) sparling, (*e*) whelk?

4. Name the longest tunnel, the worst accident, the highest pass, and the longest bridge on the British railway system.

And so on. You can do it by pure guesswork; or, if preferred, you can dish out copies of Wiseacre all round and make it a time race to see who can find the reference quickest.

The author of the "Imitation" says that if a man is disposed to pride himself on the extent of his knowledge he ought to reflect how many more things there are of which he is ignorant. For such persons Wiseacre may be confidently recommended as a book of meditation. But a certain chilling doubt begins to creep over you after you have been toying with it for three or four hours. Coleridge said that a man

who looked round him from the top of St. Paul's and remembered everything he saw would go mad; what, then, of Wiseacre? Must not his readers pray for this same gift of merciful oblivion? And does not the mere multitudinosity of the facts which exist pour scorn on the ambition to know any facts at all?

And yet, how we pump facts into the mind of youth! The names of the people who wrote books they will never read, the dates of events whose significance entirely escapes them, the elements that compose such-and-such a chemical—it is all very well, no doubt, but are not the facts retained in the memory of our most bulging-headed scholar a mere drop in the ocean of the knowable? Is it worth possessing any general information at all, when there is so much for which you have to fall back upon Wiseacre?

The same kind friend gave me another Christmas present—a Latin grammar, printed (I should say) in the seventeenth century. "These names want the singular number, *Cunae*, a Craddle, *Ambages*, Boutgates, *Gingivae*, the Goomes, *Naeniae*, a Dool Song"—yes, here is familiar ground again; here is knowledge fortunately useless. There is too much improving information in Wiseacre; I almost welcome the occurrence of Pithecanthropus, because, after all, he is only a fairy story.

Meanwhile, I must get on with that lecture.

GANDERS AND—GEESE

I SAW the other day, I think in the pages of the *Glasgow Herald*, that there is a movement quite seriously afoot in the United States for going one better in the way of prohibition ; smoking, like drinking, is threatened with the taboo. The enthusiasts of the movement allege a very singular ground for their action ; it has become the rule nowadays for young women to smoke, whereas formerly it was the exception. Obviously there is only one logical way of dealing with such a situation : tobacco must be a forbidden thing altogether—to American citizens. The more I muse over this piece of logic, the more its splendid fatuity rolls over me.

We were all told that the Umpteenth Amendment was passed simply because Americans were disgusted with the sight of young girls drinking themselves silly with cocktails. Whether this was true I have not the least idea ; but it was a recognised part of the Prohibition propaganda. If it was true, there was some sense in the argument. To get drunk is a moral fault ; for that purpose it does not matter a straw whether it is a man or a woman who is guilty of the excess : there is one moral law for both sexes. But to get drunk is also a social indiscretion ; it is a lowering of human dignity, which we may laugh about in the abstract, yet must needs view with some

repulsion when we actually meet it. And woman, as Mr. Chesterton pointed out long ago, is (or was) the accredited custodian of human dignity ; she was the priestess of humanity, with something sacrificial about the look of her long robes and the fact of her immunity from money-making secular employments.

Whoever valued that ideal (and the Americans have a very strong sense of female dignity) was naturally disgusted at the sight of a woman who, though delicately brought up in other matters, could be dissolved into giggling helplessness by mixed drinks. It was a *reductio ad absurdum ;* a magnifying mirror which exaggerated the humiliation of drunkenness, and made the other sex conscious of what it meant. Just so a woman has quite as much right morally, to tell smoking-room stories as a man. But to hear a woman telling smoking-room stories might reasonably make a man feel disgusted with this type of entertainment. It was reasonable enough (if the allegation was true) that the sight of an erring sister should set a man wondering whether alcoholic indulgence, for both sexes, might not be curbed by law.

That our minds conventionally associate smoking with drinking, it would be absurd to deny. Both are relaxations ; both dispose us to conversation of our own, and beguile for us the tedium inflicted by that of others ; both offer opportunities of hospitality on a small scale. Both, if indulged to excess, may lead to a habit of ill-health. But all these resemblances do not alter the essential difference between the two practices—namely, that drinking has a moral limit, when you have had

so many glasses, whereas the opportunities of smoking are only restricted by the number of hours in the day. Fifty pipes smoked on end might make your tongue sore, but they could not unseat your reason. The most reckless smoker does not fall by stages into the language of the smoking-room. Smoking may be self-indulgence, self-poisoning, what you will, but you cannot reduce yourself to a beast level by giving yourself up to it.

Why is it, then, or why was it that people are or were shocked by the sight of women smoking, if smoking cannot lead them to sottishness, or even to roystering? The objection to the idea was not on the moral plane at all. It was merely suggested that some things were essentially masculine, some essentially feminine. If a man used scent, you called him effeminate; if a woman smoked you called her unfeminine. Smoking was an untidy habit, just as using scent was an over-tidy habit; and it was supposed, rightly or wrongly, that a man could be too tidy, whereas a woman could not.

Smoking was a relaxation allowed to the bread-winning animal when the bread-winning hours of the day were over; the more delicate animal, whose work lay in the home, was never off duty; there were buttons to sew or socks to darn even in the drawing-room; and nobody who has tried it will doubt the impossibilty of sewing and smoking at the same time. (Sheer impossibility if you are speaking of cigarettes, and even a pipe keeps on going out.) A sop was thrown out to woman, sequestered Mussulman-wise behind this fireproof curtain; she

was allowed to eat sweets. A grown-up man eating sweets has still to me an air of effeminacy ; and, heavens, how the non-smokers can put them away ! But to smoke was unfeminine.

Mr. Kenneth Grahame, in his " Pagan Papers," defines cigarette-smoking as " a very good thing to do when you are not smoking." If you associate yourself (as I do cordially) with this standard of values, it is clear that as a matter of fact women do not smoke at all, save for a few gipsies. Whether I want women to smoke pipes I don't know ; they never will, because it spoils the shape of the mouth. To see women smoking cigarettes, though it be in a public place, scandalizes me not at all ; I am only conscious of a suppressed desire to go up and show them how to do it.

But who would deny to old-fashioned people the right of being shocked when so clear a landmark between the sexes is removed ? The more so because, as I say, cigarette smoking interferes with housewifely occupations ; and the old Roman epitaph, " She stayed at home and busied herself with wool ; good-bye," is still, for some, woman's noblest memorial. But if they do disapprove of women smoking they must do it on the right ground. They must disapprove of it because smoking is unwomanly.

Observe, then, the logic of the action proposed. " It is a crying scandal that women should be allowed to go about smoking cigarettes, because that puts them, so far as smoking is concerned, on an equality with men. We will therefore entirely forbid the import

and sale of tobacco, and thus ensure that neither men nor women shall smoke in future."

It is exactly as if they were to launch a crusade against bobbing and shingling (I have no doubt they will before long), with some such prospectus as this: "Disgusted by the unwomanly appearance of so many modern girls, who cut their hair short and make themselves look like men, we propose that in future all persons, irrespective of sex, shall be forced to let the hair grow down to the shoulders." And because smoking and drinking are coupled together in the public mind, because both habits are regarded as unnecessary luxuries by those who do not chance to practise them, these would-be legislators imagine that the public will accept a new amendment as if it were the necessary corollary of the last.

If anything of the kind is really brought off (and almost anything may happen in this mad world), I do not fancy that the prohibition will be very easily enforced. One way and another, I have lived a very large part of my life in surroundings where laws against smoking were actually in force—I mean at public schools. Now nothing is more difficult to conceal than the act of smoking. A treacherous cloud exposes it to sight—a fortune is still waiting for the manufacturer who will put smokeless tobacco on the market—and treacherous fumes linger to arrest the nostrils; stained fingers, too, need no Holmes to detect them. Yet at all schools with which I have ever come in contact (except, of course, the one in which I am teaching at present) illicit smoking has been practised in defiance of the

legislation. And a school is more easily policed than a country. How the public of the United States would get its tobacco imported I do not know—it is to be remembered that you can drop tobacco from an aeroplane, whereas you cannot drop whisky—I only feel fairly certain that the bootlegging would be constant and efficient.

What they really ought to do is to remove the duty on pipe tobacco—Is there a duty on tobacco in the United States? Alas, alas, in a fatal moment I came away without my Wiseacre's Almanack—and put it on cigarettes and cigarette tobacco instead. Ever since he came into office I have been hoping that Mr. Baldwin would take this simple, manly step, which would endear him to the gratitude of posterity.

I have been writing in these columns for nearly a year now, and this is the first time I have appealed to Mr. Baldwin to do anything —surely a creditable record. I am conscious that it might wear the appearance of anti-feminist legislation. But what would you? If woman insists upon entering the arena, she must shoulder her responsibilities. It would be something if we could soothe all our post-war troubles with a true pipe of peace.

CONCERNING BELLS

ON November 10th, 1918, the priest of a tin church on the east coast found, lying unexpectedly in his churchyard, a bell. An honest bell of some six inches diameter ; nor was there any sign of its origin to be discovered but a slip of paper beside it, and this bore words which my wretched memory misconstrues as follows :—

" This is a thing of joy and usefulness to men ; it comes from a sorrowful country ; so ring it, Father, to God."

He adopted the foundling in some mystification, which was not lessened when he began to learn, from this side and that, that a bell had been heard ringing half the night in the neighbourhood of his church, to the annoyance and something to the scandal (for it was still war-time) of the adjoining street. This is not a story of the supernatural ; he heard the explanation, though, several months later.

The donors (it appeared) must have been an Irish regiment, then quartered near him and benefiting by his ministrations. The bell had hung in a German trench once, to give the alarm whenever our troops made a surprise attack. Nor did the regiment succeed in capturing the position until at last they told off a special detachment to surround and silence the bell with the first rush of their

onslaught. The plan succeeded. When it had succeeded, and they had seen the number of dead that lay around the alarm post, the bell itself was taken for spoil, and wherever the regiment went it still went with them, till the very eve of Armistice. Prescient (I suppose) of peace near at hand, some of the men rang it at night up and down the street, with a hand on the clapper whenever an officer's step was heard, and left it at last in the churchyard with the pathetic motto quoted (and probably misquoted) above. So it hangs now in a beautiful new church, all faced with flint, and when the priest goes in to Mass he rings it, to remind his congregation that the heavenly citadels are to be stormed once again.

That story, told me the other day, has riveted my fancy ; it makes a touching story, even with all the loose threads in it that will never be properly tidied up—was the gift, for example, that of the whole regiment, or was it the caprice of a few ? And was the sorrowful country the country where men had died fighting for the Bell, or was it the country in which the heroes of the saga were bred ? We are like the women who bewailed dead Patroclus ; in the general grief each mourns his own. But the story, look at it how you will, deserves a Masefield ; we have no Epic of the Bell. And yet, if you come to think of it, what could be worthier to form the spoil of heroic combat ? If you once begin to think about bells, you will find that they need a whole book to themselves, not a fragmentary article.

Bells, more than stars, are our fate ; our little life is rounded with their pealing. The

doctor ringing at the front door heralds our entry upon the stage ; and at our final exit a grumbling sacristan must punctuate the stillness of the afternoon with dismal reverberations. It is possible for a man to live his whole life at the dictation of bells ; for myself, I must confess that in the last thirty years I have never, for a whole twelve months on end, lived in other than bell-ridden society. I can still remember the exact cadences of the bell at my private school, which always seemed to my well-tutored ear as if it were declining *duo ;* I hear it still, " DuO, duAE, duO, duOs and duO, duAS, duO."

But I must not give away these secrets, or I shall never have material to write an autobiographical novel. Nor would I willingly linger upon the bells used in schools and colleges, for they are all, in my experience, distinguished, first by a deafening clangour, and next by a habit of ringing at the most inopportune moments, notably at half-past six in the morning. If a lotus-eating existence were allowed to man, I think my *angulus terrarum* would be some café in the Square at Bruges, where I could listen all day to that admirable carillon ; wondering whether twelve o'clock would really manage to get finished before the quarter-past. And one day, I suppose, twelve o'clock would go on and on, and I should know that this was death, and the bells were ringing *in regis curia*—a fascinating image of eternity.

Observe that the bell is a purely Christian institution. It is no good talking to me about the bells on Aaron's vestments, those worn by priests of Cybele and Osiris, or used in Greek

camps and in Roman baths. I am writing of BELLS, not of mere bells. Liddell and Scott will tell you that in a Greek army an officer used to go round at night with a bell, to see whether the sentries were awake. The more fool he to carry a bell, if he wanted to find out. The fact is obviously that the sentries passed a bell from hand to hand; just loud enough, I take it, to be noticeable if the sentry stopped a chance arrow and the ringing ceased. A scrannel instrument, clearly, and as much may be said of those bells that were used in priestly ceremonies, which will have been no larger than sheep-bells.

Beasts may wear bells to show the herdsmen that they are still there, priests to show the congregation that they are still there; but nowhere in the classics will you find a bell used to summon a crowd of people together. As for the Latin *tintinnabulum*, the very name gives it away for the tinkling little thing it was. Yet this was all the help we could get out of the English-Latin, when we struggled to transpose the first line of Gray's "Elegy" into the language and thought of Ovid! "Perhaps no exact equiv.; use *campana*," said the more conscientious Gradus; but the first Latin poet who used *campana* was a Carmelite monk of the fifteenth century.

A Christian institution—they say there is a great bell that hangs at Pekin; let it hang there for me, a prodigy in that land of gongs! The Mussulman, quick to scent idolatry in every gracious tradition of Christendom, would have no bell over his mosque; he must needs send up a fellow into the minaret to shout the

time of day. It was Christendom that developed the bell, and with the bell the bell-tower, from the slim campaniles of Italy to those giant musical-boxes that brood over the hills of Somerset. The church chime was the conscience of the mediæval village, whether it called men to prayer, or warned them of bed-time, or sent them hurrying out into the street at an alarm of fire.

Nor have we improved on the bell; it is typical of the industrial revolution that the only substitute which it has provided is the hooter. Listen to the foul shrieks that disturb the morning calm of some manufacturing countryside, and remember that this crime is committed in the name of mass-production—men must be summoned from far and near by that imperious bugle-call, not wooed from their beds by soft carillons. Not more noticeable the change from the tinkling progress of the forgotten hansom to the hawking and honking of our modern taxis.

Christendom dies hard in a half-paganised country, and it is characteristic of us that we still connect bells with two pious institutions that precariously survive—marriage and Christmas. We have not yet arrived at the stage when it will be necessary to write, "Shriek out, wild sirens, across the snow," or "No wedding-hooters for him!" Bells are still a thing of joy to men. That is why they must ring all through the Gloria in the Mass of Maundy Thursday and in the Mass of Holy Saturday, but between these every bell in the house must be silenced, and meal-times only announced with a wooden rattle. All which

is fresh proof that bells are a Christian product ; for it is the instinct of the Church, when she goes into mourning, to return to primitive conditions—new-fangled inventions like the bell and the organ must for the moment be put aside. It is a wonderful thing to have a long memory.

The old custom of having bells " baptised " is good evidence of the familiar affection with which our forefathers treated them. The bell spoke for the parish with a communal tongue ; we must invest it, then, with something of personality. A name it must have and an inscription, and the inscription must be written, for choice, in that barbarous mishandling of metre the rhymed hexameter, because it preserves the very cadences of the instrument itself. " Funerals mourning, Thunderstorms turning, Sabbaths discerning, Lazy folk wake I, Tempests o'ertake I, War's alarms break I "—that is the lilt of it.

To how poor a thing have our church-bells turned to-day—in towns, at least ! How irritating are the janglings and counter-janglings of sect against sect, Bethel's cracked note trying to outvoice the plaintive tinkle of Ebenezer ! How hideous is Sunday morning made for us by that deafening half-hour before eleven—churchgoers, because we did not need the warning ; church-shunners, because those indefatigable muezzins seem to work on the irritating assumption that they will break our spirits if they toll long enough ! But the bell was made for other ends than these.

A MAN WHO NEVER "ARRIVED"

TURNING up my Wiseacre's Almanack, I find under March 10th "J. Pinkerton died, 1826." I was distressed, as we all must be, at the tidings of mortality; but I confess to a fleeting hope that I had discovered a fresh and blood original for the author cited in Mr. Belloc's "Path to Rome": "Man may, as Pinkerton (Sir Jonas Pinkerton) has said, be master of his fate, but, if so, he has a precious poor servant." Alas! when I consulted "The Dictionary of National Biography," it appeared that the baptismal name was John. Why is it that there have been no banquets, no display of bunting, no heavy leading articles on the Pinkerton centenary? He, too, was a man; he has found his niche in the "Dictionary of National Biography." Why should he lack his *vates sacer?* Sooner than leave him unhonoured, I will do it myself.

What a fascinating book is the "D. N. B."! Almost as fascinating as Wiseacre, and longer at that. How difficult, when you are looking up one name, not to read through all the entries under the other names—that motley pageant of what the Americans call near-greatness! Especially the finals and the terminals of your volume: Pockrich, for example. Pockrich (or Puckeridge) invented the musical glasses, and would have liked to invent much more. "He proposed to plant vineyards in reclaimed Irish bogs, to supply men-of-war with tin boats

which would not sink, to secure immortality by the transfusion of blood, and to provide human beings with wings." One of the world's workers, evidently. "He also bought some thousands of acres of poor land in Wicklow, and started the breeding of geese on a large scale"—let us leave him to the congenial occupation. Our business is with Pinkerton: J. Pinkerton, the antiquarian—it sounds like a memory from Wordsworth.

That he was a Scot goes without saying. The D.N.B. might almost be re-christened "The Dictionary of North Britons." He was born (how his stars consent with mine!) on February 17th, but in 1758. At the age of eighteen he published anonymously "a small poem of no great merit, entitled "Craigmillar Castle, an Elegy." In 1780, Scotlike, he abandoned the law, and in the next year, Scotlike, removed to London. There followed, in 1782, two dithyrambic Odes (1) On Enthusiasm, and (2) On Laughter—what a child of his age was this! How easy it seemed (and perhaps was) to write in the manner of Beattie, of Blair, of Falconer! Every magazine of the period seems to contain an Ode by some aspirant either on Laughter or on Enthusiasm. But the laurels did not fall to our hero thus easily. "Although his verses indicate a facile command of a variety of metres, they possess no distinct poetic qualities." It is a fellow-countryman, I dare to guess, that thus damns him with faint praise.

In that age, if you could not make a name for yourself by writing poetry, you must make a name for somebody else instead. A genera-

tion that would not listen to the piping of Macpherson under his own name would buy and avidly discuss his alleged translation of Ossian. Poor Chatterton had recourse to the same subterfuge. Our hero, it seems, only lacked "distinctive poetic qualities" to make him into a Chatterton; had he succeeded, and then died young, he might to-day be the patron of unrecognised genius; Keats might have begun a sonnet with the words "O Pinkerton, how very sad thy fate!" (How did Keats, by the way, come to write such a villainous line?) The gods willed otherwise; Pinkerton the antiquarian was to outlive Pinkerton the poet.

But not for want of trying. He published in 1783 "Select Scottish Ballads, or Hardy Knute, an heroic Ballad, now first published complete, with nine other approved Scottish ballads and some not hitherto made public, in the Tragic Style. With two Dissertations—(1) on the Oral Tradition of Poetry; (2) on the Tragic Ballad." An unkind article in the "Gentleman's Magazine" stigmatised a great part of these discoveries as original compositions, and Pinkerton himself admitted afterwards that the work was largely his own. He pointed out, to do justice to himself, that he had never actually stated the contrary. His original work still met with no encouragement; meanwhile his reputation had suffered among the learned; he was a prospector who had salted the mine.

In the next year he published an Essay on Medals, "a valuable work." But pure authorship was still his dream; anonymity and

forgery had brought him no credit; he must fall back on the pseudonym. Rechristening himself "Robert Heron," he published "a somewhat eccentric volume, entitled 'Letters of Literature,' in which, besides recommending a new method of orthography, he expressed very depreciatory opinions of the classical authors of Greece and Rome." Poor Æschylus, poor Virgil, to incur the condemnation of a Pinkerton! He seems to have been a man born before his time, exploiting all those original ideas which have made certain writers of our own age so widely respected. Or—is it possible that these too, men of our own day, will look rather small in the "D. N. B." of a hundred years hence, small even beside Æschylus, even beside Virgil?

Anyhow, it was through this book that he became known, first to Horace Walpole, then to Gibbon. The latter seems to have recommended him as translator and editor of a proposed series of "English Monkish Historians"; and once more he missed fame only by a hair's-breadth accident. What fun he could have had with the monkish historians, with Gibbon for his model; how scornfully he might have exposed their literary impostures! But the scheme fell through, and Pinkerton returned to the ballad. This time, he really did publish a set of quite genuine and quite interesting old ballads. But he had to pay the penalty of having cried "Wolf!"; his genuine discoveries were widely put down as fresh instances of forgery. He returned to pseudonymity, and as "H. Bennet, M.A." (it is not a bad idea to take a degree while you

are about it), produced "Twelve Hundred of the Best Apophthegms and Jests from books in Several Languages." I wish I had this book. Not so much for the sake of the apophthegms; but, if Pinkerton was the man I take him for, the footnotes should be worth reading.

But he was still keeping his best jest up his sleeve. This was his "Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths, being an Introduction to the Ancient and Modern History of Europe." It is not difficult for the modern reader to reconstruct the book from the statement that "the Irish, the Scottish Highlanders, the Welsh, the Bretons, and the Spanish Biscayans are the only surviving aborigines of Europe, and that their features, history, actions, and manners indicate a fatal moral and intellectual weakness, rendering them incapable of susceptibility to the higher influences of civilisation. Throughout the work facts are subordinated to preconceived theories." Poor Pinkerton! Had he but lived a hundred years later, what a respectable position he might have won for himself by these charlatan speculations! To be actually the patentee of the Great Nordic Stunt, and to get no more gratitude for it than this! Do not some of us newspaper fellows make a comfortable living by dishing up these same fancies in our turn, for the benefit of a public that likes to think of itself as Anglo-Saxon?

The rest of the acts of Pinkerton and all that he did, his contributions to the history of Scotland, and his law suit with one Anderson,

an Edinburgh lawyer who had been devilling for him, are written in the "D. N. B." If you read between the lines of his story, it is surely a tragedy of human ambition. He tried so hard to be a literary genius, and only succeeded in being an eminent Scotsman. Do I decry the eminent Scotsman? God forbid. But there are so many of them; their Walhalla suffers from overcrowding.

He would have liked to be remembered in the same breath with Chatterton as a poet who could make the ancient models his own; or with Gibbon, as a plausible stylist who could rewrite and almost refashion history to suit his own prejudices. Instead, his portion in death is among the antiquarians and the numismatists; he has bent his shoulders for others to climb the wall of fame. "A very little and very thin old man, with a very small, sharp, yellow face, thickly pitted by the smallpox, and decked with a pair of green spectacles"—did he feel the bitterness of outliving Keats and Shelley and surviving them as a mediocrity? Or had he learned the art of laughing at his juvenilia? Did he scoff at the frivolous pastimes of these young men, and contrast them to their discredit with serious literature?

Anyhow, it is Pinkerton's year this year, and the faithful astronomy of Wiseacre hails his influence. Then until 2026, he will pass once more into occultation. Rare planets, was it worth while to spurn delights and live laborious days only to achieve such periodic immortality as this?

TUBES, TRAMS, AND TYRANNY

I SUPPOSE there is no Limerick more frequently quoted in the newspapers than the one about the man who said, "Damn! At last I've found out what I am, a creature that moves in determinate grooves, in fact not a bus, but a tram."

I have the best reasons for knowing it, because the newspapers are generally kind enough to print with it an intimation that I wrote it. I have ever held that, whereas notoriety can be acquired, fame is an accident. The only fame I possess is that of having written this Limerick, which as a matter of fact was current in Oxford at the time when I was born. I used to write to the newspapers and tell them about it, but it was no good. I learned, after a while, that once a statement gets into your Fleet Street *dossier*, whether creditable or discreditable, it is useless to deny or to explain. You can only accept the character which has been imposed on you, and try to live up to it.

This long habit of putative authorship has given me a kind of proprietary feeling about the five-line masterpiece, as if I, more than others, had the right to take it for my text. It is a singular thing that a metaphor can come back like a boomerang and become verified in real life. That anonymous genius (not I, Gigadibs, not I) saw in the tram, in one inspired moment, the image of determinism; saw in it the emblem of a kind of intellectual tyranny which wants to force all human beings

into the same mould, to make us all into mechanical units. And then, some forty years later (forty, Gigadibs, not twenty) the Powers above us propose to turn the tram itself, the literal, hard, unyielding object, into a tool of despotism. You rub your eyes—it is as if the R.S.P.C.A. had actually summoned a man for keeping two tame sheep in a room.

I profess a personal disinterestedness over this tram v. bus controversy. My own memories of urban travel are for the most part memories of the groove; I was early fascinated by those gigantic steam-kettles, in two sections, which used to ply between Aston and Birmingham; hardly less so by the cable-trams which went past Snow Hill—if you peered down over the slit in the middle you could just catch sight of the endless cable beneath, that seemed to symbolise perpetual motion. And in Lancashire buses were unknown, however propelled; everywhere the tram (only we called it a "car" up there) was in the ascendant. Nor have the buses of modern London any personal thrill for me; I never know which direction they are going in (so disconcerting are their disappearances down side streets), and I have not the face to approach the conductor with a question that brands me as a country cousin. I hand myself over to the tube, confident that it will shoot me, in spite of all my incompetence, to the desired goal. I feel as if I were wrapping myself up in one of those mysterious balls (how rare nowadays!) that used to carry your change along overhead wires in the great emporia of our childhood. For me, the unadventurous

groove. But I will not be narrow-minded ; I will not grudge the bus-goer his fresh air. Besides, if he came down into the tube there would be still less fresh air for me.

The individual rights and wrongs of the particular case have been discussed, and are being discussed vociferously elsewhere ; let us stick to the general principles of the thing. A tramway system is essentially a monopoly. An omnibus system need not be. The same contrast holds between the tube and the omnibus, with the additional difference that whereas the tram is a genuine substitute for the omnibus, the tube is not. The tendency, then, of any legislation which bolsters up groove-travel in its rivalry with free travel is a tendency towards monopoly, whatever justification the immediate facts may appear to lend it.

A tramway system must be a monopoly. You cannot have two rival companies using the same set of lines, nor two sets of tram lines running along the same street. In places (there are Lancashire towns like that) where the condition of the streets makes it impossible to travel by bus without villainous discomfort, the tram is supreme ; no threat of competition can goad it into further efficiency. Where a municipal authority bolsters up the tram system against the bus system it is artificially reproducing the same situation. The trouble about the tram is that it is altogether unsuited to London conditions. The tram is arterial ; it serves a useful purpose in straggling manufacturing towns which grow out along main roads, the buildings clustering round those main roads, while all the intervals are filled up

with pits and slag-heaps. But for a city which grows (like London) in outward ripples, you want lateral communication at close intervals ; and the only sensible way of supplying that need is to have vehicles that are free to choose their own route, pick their way hither and thither, vehicles which do not move in determinate grooves—in fact, not a tram, but a bus. Such mobility both serves the immediate needs of the citizens, and avoids congestion in a particular, limited set of thoroughfares. There is really no argument for the trams in London except the unfortunate fact that they are there.

Of course, there are all the minor difficulties —the skidding of bicycles in the lines, the reluctance of old ladies to dismount from a conveyance which does not draw up beside the pavement, the fact that a single tramway breakdown holds up the whole line—some even dislike the motion of the trams themselves. But the *essential* fault of the proposed traffic reduction is the Procrustean effort to popularise the trams, not by making the tram service better, but by making the bus service worse. It is a fresh advance in the dreadful attempt to make the man fit the bed instead of making the bed fit the man. It is the worship of the groove.

I admit the case for tubes against buses has more of my sympathy. Here the tendency is not to replace an efficient by an inefficient means of conveyance : although tube travel will always be a nuisance until we have a branch from Marble Arch to Hyde Park Corner, and (*salva majestate*) an extension from Hyde Park Corner to Victoria. But here, again, you are establishing a monopoly, for a bus service does

theoretically admit of competition, whereas a tube service does not. And you are limiting the citizen's freedom of choice; you are condemning him to the mines; he is not to be dropped actually at the door of the place he wants to get to, he is not to look round him and admire the architecture of the Albert Memorial. The free citizen must become a cave-dweller, like the cave-dwellers of Plato's Republic, with the suggestion of a thousand advertisements drilling and dragooning his mind, instead of being allowed to contemplate historic sights and derive inspiration from civic memories. One pictures a really patriotic person who should always take off his hat in the Bakerloo between Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square, because he knows that he is passing under the Cenotaph, though, owing to the traffic regulations, he is never actually allowed to see it.

The tube, I say, is not even theoretically a substitute for the bus. You cannot jump off the tube to greet a friend, or on to it to avoid a creditor. You cannot knock five minutes off a short journey by taking the tube; in all probability that amount of time is lost in waiting for your ticket, waiting for the lift, waiting for the train. You cannot avoid in the tube the shy man's nightmare, that of looking complete strangers either in the face or in the boots. You cannot explore unfamiliar corners of London; you cannot enjoy the pageantry of the shop windows. You cannot watch the Lord Mayor's Show from the tube. Perhaps such considerations are not in themselves very important; but it is the small liberties of life which make it worth living.

Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus —that noble motto of the Catholic Church— ought to be adopted as a war-cry by the bus-lovers. *Quod semper*—the bus is independent of temporary accidents ; if the electricians go on strike, its engines still pant ; if its predecessor has a breakdown there is no difficulty in steering past ; if roads are taken up it can choose another route and avoid the congestion. *Quod ubique*—it can go everywhere ; some fresh street of residential houses springs into being, and a bus can ply past the doors without any effort of line-laying ; alternative routes to some place of interest lie open, and the buses can alternate, whereas the trams must all follow a set line. *Quod ab omnibus*—there are people who like a ride in the open air ; there are people who resent the motion of trams, who find them difficult to catch when a run across a motor-infested street is involved ; there are people to whom the labyrinthine catacombs of the tube represent an unwelcome effort of pedestrianism. There are people, finally, who like cheap fares, and believe that the comparatively open competition between bus and bus is more likely to achieve that end than a system of monopoly.

Meanwhile, what is the traffic difficulty ? Is it that the buses come so close together as to get in one another's way ? Or is it that they fill up the road to the detriment of taxis and of racing motors ? And does anybody who has boarded a tube train during the rush hours really think that the traffic problem can be solved by producing further congestion in the tubes ?

LONDON'S STATIONS

DOCTOR JOHNSON said (I think) that the most agreeable piece of scenery a Scot ever sees in his native country is the road that leads to England. Those of us who (unlike the great Doctor) are provincials at heart, who visit the Metropolis with reluctance, and shun it the more eagerly the "brighter" it becomes, have much the same feeling about London. The only real attraction about it for us is the ease with which you can get away from it. It has such good railway services to the parts of England that really matter.

In Easter Week one may be pardoned for indulging this heretical point of view; for at Easter the most fervid of Cockneys feels, for a moment, the wanderlust, fights his way out of London, though it be only as far as Southend. Which makes me want to put into words the elusive impression most of us have had—that stations, and especially terminus stations, have a spirit and an atmosphere in which each of them differs from its neighbour. Most of us have our favourite stations and our dislikes among the stations. Are these preferences born in us, or can they be analysed?

I do not mean the stations as they are approached from the railway; as the train steams into them they lose all individuality, and become merely depressing. Depressing, too, is the first view of London you usually get

when you come out from the station into the street. Only Charing Cross really puts you down in the heart of things, in an air melodious with the bells of St. Martin's ; Paddington reaches the fringe of reputable Squares, but its immediate neighbourhood is somehow curiously moth-eaten ; Victoria, too, has its frontage of mean shops to discourage the visitor. . . .

By the way, if anybody wants to make a fortune, why not set up a new kind of Stores, with branches opposite all the big stations, at which you can buy all those things, and only those things, which people forget to pack ?—studs, tooth-brushes, razor-blades, tobacco-pouches, handkerchiefs, ties, hot-water-bottles, odd volumes of the Breviary, fountain-pens, indoor shoes, that little daily dose, racing calendars, and so on. I have compiled a man's list, but my Stores, of course, would stock all the feminine counterparts of such needs. You would have assistants specially trained to pack a bag in a minute and a half with all the objects indicated by a traveller who had left his whole luggage behind. Your stock would cost you little ; it would be bought up almost entirely at the railway remnant sale. And you would call it " The Forget-me-not Stores." I believe there is money in it.

But now about these termini. Can I, without invidiousness, register the opinion that nine people out of ten, if asked which of them they liked least, would mention Liverpool Street ? Of course, it has natural difficulties to contend with. " Pity they haven't got a broader entrance to this station," we say to one another as the train pulls up against the silent

platforms of that which was once Bishopsgate. "Ah, that's right ; a broader entrance is what they want." "Bottle-neck opening, that's what it is," we add, with hazy memories of war articles. But there is something unfriendly in the atmosphere of the station itself. Alone, I think, among the London termini it fails to provide you with one single cross-platform from which you can reach your own platform, wherever it be, without climbing stairs. The suburban and the rural trains come in all together, so that the belated traveller is continually held up by opposing currents of humanity. And its frequenters have the unhappy, jaded look of city-dwellers ; there is no adventure in their eyes. A place of learning (so they tell me) is best reached from Liverpool Street, but it does little to leaven the appearance of your fellow-travellers ; there is no remarkable profusion of bulging foreheads. And the seats—why are there so few seats ?

Waterloo has an unfair advantage ; it has been gutted and rebuilt within a short memory. The end platform at Waterloo is the only place in London where there is always room to move. It is a station full of human interest, for here the loiterer, with eyes discreetly half-averted, can witness a hundred little tragedies of life—the son who is going off to be a sailor, the soldier who is saying good-bye to his girl, the exile making his way to Southampton. The thrill of battle and of the sea, almost staled for us till recently, communicates itself here as nowhere else. Besides, there is the electric clock ; if time hangs heavy on your hands you

can join the crowd that watches the minutes tick away, flapping as they tick.

Victoria is misshapen, a preposterous duet of Siamese twins. The left-hand twin is laborious of access and meagre in appearance by the side of its more prosperous sister. And the prosperity of the sister (though I have enjoyed the opulence of its restaurant) is to some of us a source of irritated depression—why *do* all these people want to go to Brighton? Of course, if they are the sort of people that like (or likes, I forget which) to go to Brighton, by all means let them go there; it is the best place for them. There is a thin stream of literary gentlemen who think that they can still extract ore from the badly overworked vein of Sussex. But the patrons of the greater Victoria are, if it is not unkind to say so, the sort of people who go to Brighton.

Kipling mentions three places where, sooner or later, you will meet everybody in the world: Suez is one, I think, and Charing Cross another; I have forgotten the third. That was when the boat trains used to start from Charing Cross. It was a pretty fancy, if you had time to waste at Charing Cross, to single out some passenger and feign that he was an absconding business man making a hasty flight to Vienna; then you darted curious glances at him in the hope that he would take you for a detective.

The triad of Northern stations that beckons you away from Bloomsbury seems to invite contrast by mere difference—Euston so severely classical, St. Pancras so flamboyantly Gothic, King's Cross so careless of outward appearances. I say outward appearances, for the actual span

of its roof is curiously pleasing to the eye. Having quoted Johnson above, I cannot forbear here a hackneyed reference to Stevenson's thrill over the cry " Any more for the North ? " Euston will take you to the North, but it is King's Cross that points you there. The appeal lies in that straightness and uniqueness which mark the Great Northern main line. " Scotland," it says, " or intermediately " ; it does not contemplate the possibility of your wanting to go anywhere else. Euston is almost too rich in the variety of its invitation, too impartial between the claims of Scotland, Ireland, and industrial Lancashire. Euston, too, depends much on external glories : contrast that Cyclopean approach with the huddled confusion of platforms 12, 13, 14 and 15 ! St. Pancras, though it is the shortest way into the country, lacks altogether (for me) romantic suggestion.

Marylebone I had almost forgotten, so humbly and peacefully it nestles behind its vast hotel. It is a pleasant spot ; no station is so full of bird song. But its platforms, when you look into it, are surprisingly few ; there is something undignified, too, about its *mésalliance* with underground means of travel.

I have reserved Paddington till last, because I feel sure that in an open competition it would receive the highest score of votes. It conjures up to the mind all the places which most soothe, by the very thought of them, the mind of the tired city-dweller—Cornwall and Dartmoor (not in the restricted sense), and mysterious Somerset, and the great rocks of the Wye Valley, and Shropshire hills, and little

Cotswold villages, and the incomparable Thames. To wait in Paddington is no dreary Purgatory ; it will not be ten minutes before you meet a friend on the platform ; for this railway is the artery (or would that be a mixed metaphor ?) that leads to England's brains. It follows the lines along which the mind travels, the Thames Valley, the Bath Road, the Northern Downs, the blue-fringed coast-line of Cornwall. Archdeacons sail up and down the platform, like galleons before a breeze. There is a dignity about Paddington.

I am very glad that I have left myself no space to draw a moral from this article, for I cannot see that there is one.

THE CONTENTED VAGRANT

A KINDLY correspondent reproaches me with writing too much about railways. Let him rest assured that, if I do, it is not for love of them. But what would you? If a galley-slave were to write articles for the papers you would pardon him for a poverty of imagination which must needs find its text, now and again, in the back of the man in front of him. My fault is the same.

But, to attest my penitence and to record the fact that I have had a holiday, let us talk about walking-tours instead. If this is not the opposite of talking about railways, I do not know what is. For who flings down the gauntlet to the steam thoroughfares more defiantly than he who shoulders a pack under the treacherous skies of April, and marches, ticketless, towards the county frontier?

I cannot see why more people do not walk in Hertfordshire. I am very glad that they do not, for every true walker wants the route to himself—allowing, of course, for a chosen companion, though even this, I find, is unnecessary if you have room for a copy of the "Republic." You cannot outdistance a fellow-walker, or let him outdistance you, with a mere wave of the hand—the motorist's privilege. You must accompany him for miles, though it be with acute embarrassment on both sides.

But it puzzles me, the emptiness of Hertfordshire and its neighbouring hills. Only

once did I meet any rivals, and that was near Tring. Rivals, I mean, with an amateur status; the professionals of the road were there in plenty, hobbling, drowsing, manicuring themselves, according to their wont. A surer test is the attitude of people in inns. There are parts of England where the motives of pedestrianism are taken for granted; parts where they obviously put you down for a madman. In these parts we greet the sight of a knapsack with pleased surprise. "Ah, yes," we say, "there's no way of seeing the country like that." But few of us do it. For twenty Cockney sandwiches that are eaten on Box Hill or the Sussex Downs I suppose only one finds its way to the Chilterns.

And yet this northern side of London has its advantages. The great roads and the great railways spread out from London like fantracery, and in the intervals between these you find the country as untouched as Lincolnshire. The great railways mean that if the worst comes to the worst, and you go lame or finish your money, you are always within striking distance of London. The great roads mean that each of the larger towns has a practicable inn—its larder full, because at this distance the motorists want a meal; its upper rooms empty, because at this distance the motorists do not want a bed.

They are saying, I hear, that country inns are becoming intolerable. Well, anybody who knows them has his grievances; they should keep more literature, for example, and use coffee instead of some unpleasant stuff that comes out of tins, and why do they make all

that fuss and ceremony about the simple act of having a bath ? But there is hospitality, and a fire lit in late spring, old prints, and Niersteiner at five shillings a bottle, and that atmosphere of crooked passages, alternating levels, projecting beams, which tells you that the house is old without self-conscious antiquarianism. Oh, that horrible aloofness of hotels in big cities, where you must carry the key of your bedroom about with you, and boys in buttons go to and fro shouting men's names ! You are spared that in the market towns.

Charles Lamb writes of " J. E.," in his essay on " My Relations " : " He advertised me but the other day of some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me, *knowing me to be a great walker*, in my own immediate vicinity —who have haunted the identical spot any time these twenty years ! " One of these lanes poor, well-meaning J. E. discovered must have been that stretch of four miles between Lamb's own cottage at Cherry Green and Hare Street (the other Hare Street)—a bit of Roman road surely, for it continues the line of the Roman road from Dunmow to Braughing, and joins it up with the long, straight reach from Baldock to Biggleswade.

I chose its next-door neighbour, that crosses from Wood End to Walkern, and then a third, which begins a mile and a half out of Walkern and ends a mile and a half out of Baldock. The record-breaker would despise these grass tracks, with their uncertain footholds ; but to the contented vagrant they are an ideal thoroughfare. We covered some fourteen or fifteen miles, with a hedge on either hand all the way ;

yet I call my companion to witness that in all that time we passed but one motor, and it a baker's van.

What is the history of these green lanes? It is misleading to call them "bridle paths." Who was going to hedge in on either side a grass track some two dozen feet wide across miles of country? Possibly they were only meant for driving cattle, but there is a purposefulness about their direction which seems to proclaim they were metalled roads once. Is it only the decay of agriculture which has allowed them to become thus overgrown, or is it the railways that have made them unnecessary? Yet neither railways nor agricultural depression would have grown the grass over them by Lamb's time. It seems as if, even a century back, that centralisation of England must have begun which is making all our civilisation radiate from London in long arteries, careless of the connection between them; that the frequented roads, even then, were roads that went north and south, while the roads from east to west were neglected. Anyhow, if you do not mind rough going, these lanes are the paradise of the walker; you can neither lose your way nor be headed off by irritable farmers; yet no barren hill slopes could isolate you more effectively from your fellow-men.

Baldock will be an admirable little town until somebody buys up the large factory, something the size and shape of the British Museum, which at present goes begging. At the inn there you meet that new sort of democracy, or at least fellow-citizenship, which is springing up between the motoring classes.

There is only one difficulty in its situation—that if you would follow the Hertfordshire border south and west, you must traverse or circumvent the garden city of Letchworth, that dreadful monument of *urbs in rure*, which lies under a sort of curse, so that no wine or strong drink is sold in it. And even when you have done that you can scarcely avoid Hitchin, unless you creep round to the north by Ickleford. But it was raining, and we dared not take chances with the country roads. For the same reason, I went on from Hitchin to Luton by a road full of motors and tramps, and at Luton itself, for the wet weather had now turned to thunder, gave up all hope and took the train for Dunstable. It was a day lost; another time I will be bolder, and strike out for the Icknield Way.

I am quite aware, thank you, that Dunstable is in Bedfordshire; indeed, a mile or two out of Luton I marked carefully a white post by the roadside at which, ecclesiastically speaking, my faculties expired. But you are close to Hertfordshire all the time, and Dunstable Downs must have been a great place for boxing matches in the days when you had to dodge the police. You could meet at Studham, and you were in Bedfordshire, with Hertfordshire a mile to the east and Buckinghamshire a mile to the west.

The Icknield Way becomes painfully civilised from Dunstable to the outskirts of Tring; but, if you are not working to a strict time-table, you may vary your route by climbing the wall of hills on your left, the last spurs of the Chilterns. From Dunstable Downs you can see, as

if you were in real mountain country, the reflection of your map in the world that lies at your feet. There is Totternhoe ; there is the church tower of Edlesborough—a squat affair really, but in order to dominate the landscape it stands tip-toe upon a little hill, like Keats ; eight miles to the north are the roofs and the smoke of Leighton Buzzard. To the east stretches that great hill-barrier which has no real outlet between you and Somersetshire, except the gap of Thames ; to the north lies the whole plain of Bedfordshire, dappled with the smiles and frowns of an April day.

Further on, Beacon Hill is even better worth climbing. It is aptly named ; for, though it is only a spur, not four hundred feet above the level of the plain, you can keep it in view all the way from Dunstable to Wendover, until the turn of Combe Hill. From it you can look across Aylesbury into Oxfordshire, and on a clear day you might, I suppose, catch sight of Dorchester Clump. Those little white clouds that puff up from the ground are really trains (yes, railway trains) in the deep cutting just north of Tring. All about you is the flat plain of the Southern Midlands ; you must be standing, I think, upon the Delectable Mountains—it is hard to see what other model Bunyan could have found for them, living at Bedford.

History is epitomised here, like geography. At the foot of the hill there is something that looks like a Roman camp ; a lane goes northward from it that looks like a Roman road. Between Tring and Aylesbury a line of silver marks the abortive experiment of the canals.

Of the railways I am forbidden to speak ; of the motors I would rather not speak. And above Wendover there should be aeroplanes stunting ; but it seems nowadays as if the Air Force were abandoning Halton Camp, leaving nothing behind them but a lot of notices which forbid you to pick the primroses.

Wendover—but I am transgressing my limits. And no wonder ; for three days' walking is, by the spiritual measure of time, as good as a fortnight spent in one place.

WHEN I AM DEAD

WHEN a traveller gets out of the train at Crewe, has he left the train, or has the train left him? There are both points of view. To his fellow-passengers he has become merely a smell of stale tobacco. On the other hand, they have become, to him, only a row of dimly remembered faces.

He has a right to look at it from his own point of view; for he, like them, is a spectator of all time and existence. (There is very little else to be, on Crewe platform.) So it is, I take it, when a man dies, and a fresh chicken has broken its way out of this egg-shell world of sense. We think of him as a passenger who has passed into the night; but he is *there* still; there was a platform for him to step on to.

What it will be like, being dead, my imagination entirely refuses to tell me. It jibs at the fence completely. I can no more *imagine* myself as a disembodied spirit than I can imagine myself as a piece of soap. This want of imagination often turns men into materialists; and they say, deceiving themselves, that they are intellectually incapable of believing in immortality.

But, intellectually, the evidence is all the other way. Man has that capacity for becoming the object of his own thought, which we call intellect; and the intellectual processes, as such, have no specific counterpart in the material organisation of his brain. The

intellect, then, is given to us in experience as a non-material fact.

There is a spiritual element in me—or, rather, I am a spirit as well as a body—and I should think it as unreasonable to suppose that my spirit ceases to exist when I die as to suppose that my body ceases to exist when I die. The matter of me and the spirit of me are both *there ;* only the spirit, it seems, must find a different " there " to persist in.

Intellect then assures me, and Revelation bears me out in believing, that my spirit goes on in a disembodied state. Not in that state for ever, adds Revelation : and intellect does not hesitate to accept the qualification—a resurrection of the body some day seems necessary in order to explain why the body was ever there at all :

> Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
> And your mouth of your own geranium's red.

But for an indefinite interval my spirit will have to be a disembodied spirit ; and I take it that the scope of this article is limited to considering what happens in that interval.

Intellect adds that there is at least an enormous probability of that continued life being a life of rewards and punishments. Kant held this to be certain ; at least, considering the inequalities of life here, it is eminently reasonable. And one thing seems lucidly clear—that the moment the soul is free of the body it passes into a state of uninterrupted attention to the claims of God and to its own eternal destiny.

The saints, I suppose, achieve that state in

life; for the workaday Christian there is always some distraction, born of sense or sense-memory, tugging at his thoughts; even on his death-bed weakness and pain would make such attention impossible to him.

But when the tug of sense is relaxed and at the same time the soul experiences, instead of believing in, the fact of its own immortality, what is there to prevent the attention from flying at once to the only issues which have any importance? Newman in "The Dream of Gerontius" (the only thing in literature which makes you feel dead) brings that out, when he makes the soul say that the repose which it now enjoys

> . . . drives back my thoughts upon their spring
> By a strange introversion, and perforce
> I now begin to feed upon myself,
> Because I have nought else to feed upon.

Here Revelation steps in and amplifies this guess by telling me that after death comes the Judgment. My eternal destiny has been settled for me in view of the life I lived and the death I died here; and the sentence will be immediately pronounced. I do not know what process external to myself that will involve; I only know that I shall then be certain whether I am destined for Heaven or not; and whether, if I am destined for Heaven, I have to experience Purgatory first.

If I should die in a state of unrepented mortal sin—that is, if death should find me rebellious against God and false to my own higher nature—then I should expect punishment. If, for example, I should have the unhappiness to die out of communion with the

Catholic Church, after having been once given the faith, I should expect punishment.

Revelation adds that such punishment would be eternal, and would begin to take effect at once. What the pains are that can be inflicted on a disembodied spirit, I do not know. He knows, who created both sense and spirit.

If I should be found (as I hope to be, though not by any merits of my own) destined for heaven, a dual possibility remains. If I should die in a high degree of sanctity (or after successfully gaining, in spite of the difficult spiritual conditions attached to it, a plenary indulgence) the sentence of eternal happiness would begin to take effect at once. I could never find that the Catholic Church has any sort of theory as to the number of souls who escape Purgatory altogether. When a saint is canonised she says that the soul of the dead person is already in heaven. But she only canonises a few people, whose holiness in life has been attested in a remarkable way; she does not assume that these are the *only* people in heaven. It is certain that there are many others. Especially, I suppose, where the soul has already paid much of its debt by suffering in this life; it was impossible not to have that feeling about many who were killed in the war. And heaven means the open vision of God, and glory, and a home-coming, and recognition of those we loved.

But, for myself, that is not what I expect. I do not agree with Mr. Arnold Lunn that I am not a Christian, but I am conscious of being a very inadequate Christian; and reason alone would suggest the probability that,

should I escape eternal punishment, there is still punishment to be undergone by way of indemnifying Divine Justice before I can hope for a heaven. I do not think that in saying this I am letting my Christianity bias my reason. If there ever were two heathens who achieved a sublimely moral view of the future life they were Plato and Virgil. And allowance is made, both in Plato and in Virgil, for a period of expiatory suffering before the soul reaches its place of rest :

> Even when their life leaves its last glimpse of day,
> Not yet all guilt, all taint is purged away :
> Poor souls, they feel earth's long-inveterate rust
> Their mortal natures wondrously encrust :
> Therefore the expiating pang they know,
> And pay full score for sins of long ago.

What a poor philosophy it is that would make the fact of punishment inconsistent with the fact of forgiveness !

In any case, Revelation fortifies this guess of mine and of my heathen masters by telling me that there is indeed a Purgatory, in which souls that have died in a state of grace may still have to atone for sin, even when the guilt of it has been remitted. It is clear that such punishment will have a more remedial effect than most of the pain we suffer in this world, because the soul, being now certain of its immortal destiny and incapable of revolt against God, will endure them with that tranquillity which is born of certain hope.

Revelation tells me further that, in the mercy of God, such punishments are remitted to a certain extent in answer to the prayers which are offered for the dead by the friends whom they have left behind them. That is why

to-morrow, the 2nd of November, and the month generally are specially dedicated by Catholics to the thought of their dead. We believe that prayer is the essential bond between souls, and that it is precisely this bond which is not severed by death. And such prayers may be infinitely variable in kind; you are praying, perhaps, if you take off your hat before the Cenotaph.

And here imagination, which has so long been refusing its aid, does give a flicker. There is just one thing I can imagine about what will happen when I am dead. For the last six years I have offered the sacrifice of the Mass for all the secular priests in the South of England who have died during that time; and I shall have the same obligation as long as I live—it is a sort of benefit club that we have. When I am dead all the secular priests in the South of England will be doing the same for me; I shall be drawing, as it were, my death insurance; and until they have done so they will not be able to get rid of a certain black-edged card from their mantelpieces.

If there is any truth in the stories you hear, in Spiritualist circles or elsewhere, of dead people making themselves audible and visible to the living, I can still see no reason to suppose that these phantoms are themselves the spirits of the dead. Granted that the facts have been properly ascertained, I see no sort of reason why these phantoms should be anything more than impersonal reflections of the dead personality, bearing the same sort of relation to it as an echo bears to a sound.

After all, with all the optics in the world, we

can't give any explanation *why* the process of photography should leave an image on the sensitised plate. We have no idea why water-finders should be able to detect the presence of water far underground. But they do.

It is obvious, surely, that there is a margin of natural possibilities which has not been, and perhaps never will be, successfully investigated; and if that is so it is a capital mistake to suppose that you are *necessarily* in touch with the supernatural when you come across something which science cannot explain for you. I see no proof that the "messages" which are received at *séances* come from the souls of the dead; and I hereby give the Spiritualists leave to raise my ghost as often as they like, because I feel fully convinced that my soul will know nothing about it and will have nothing to do with it.

The reason why we Catholics dislike the Spiritualist conception of a future life is, I take it, this: We cannot believe that our dead are occupied in the trivialities of table-rapping and tambourine-playing, when they have set out, once for all, on the journey of immortality. Those who are in Purgatory have not yet achieved the vision of God, but already, for their living friends, they walk in an air of immortality.

> Yet not as in the days
> Of earthly ties we love them;
> For they are touched with rays
> From light that is above them.

Their faces are set towards Jerusalem, and we would not have them look backward.

LONDON : CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND GRIGGS (PRINTERS), LTD.
CHISWICK PRESS, TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

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